



Time's Up: Hollywood Activism May Soon Lead To Pay Equity Scrutiny At Your Workplace

Insights

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The issue of gender equality in the workplace is staying firmly in the public eye with the creation of the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund. Supported by over 300 actresses, agents, writers, directors, producers, and entertainment executives, including big names such as Reece Witherspoon and Shonda Rhimes, the fund is administered by the National Women's Law Center and is available to support harassment and retaliation lawsuits by women in all industries. The Time's Up initiative was front and center at Sunday's 2018 Golden Globes, where almost all female—and many male—stars wore all black or "Time's Up" lapel pins to show solidarity with the victims of harassment and to bring awareness to the fund.

While Time's Up grew out of the reports of systemic harassment and the resulting #MeToo movement, the stated purpose of the group is broader than just sexual harassment, and it seeks to address systemic inequality in the workplace. This ongoing focus on workplace inequality may fuel compensation scrutiny as the attention spills over from harassment into the pay equity sphere. In fact, when asked by E! News correspondents why they were wearing black on the red carpet, Debra Messing, Laura Dern, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Eva Longoria explicitly cited equal pay and raised the issue that a female E! News anchor recently resigned because she learned that E! News paid her half of what it paid her male co-anchor.

There may be empirical support for this entangling of sexual harassment and pay equity. Recent research by Heather McLaughlin, Christopher Uggen, and Amy Blackstone concluded that sexual harassment may contribute to the gender pay gap, because women who experience harassment often leave lucrative positions or change the trajectory of their careers, and not usually for the better.

Companies should be prepared to have their compensation systems scrutinized for pay gaps because the discussions about the equality and treatment of women in the workplace are not going to die down anytime soon. Moreover, as we have continued to report here on this blog, new state and local pay equity laws and salary history bans are now providing new avenues for employees to bring claims of pay disparity, meaning employers have more incentive than ever to make sure they are on the right side of the law. Please visit Fisher Phillips' [PAY EQUITY](#) webpage and be sure to subscribe to the blog the *Pay Equity Matters: Mind the Gap* to keep abreast of developments in the area of equal pay.

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Megan C. Winter

Partner

858.597.9622

[Email](#)

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