



## Request for City Council Action from the Department of Intergovernmental Relations

**To:** Council Vice President Elizabeth Glidden and Members of the City Council

**Date:** March 7, 2014

**Referral to:** City Council

**Subject:** Amend 2014 City State Legislative Agenda to reflect City of Minneapolis support for the Women's Economic Security Act of 2014.

**Recommendation:** Approval.

### Department Information

Prepared by: Melissa Lesch, Senior Government Relations Representative, IGR Department Presenters in Committee: Gene Ranieri, Director, IGR Department Melissa Lesch, Senior Government Relations Representative, IGR Department
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### Financial Impact:

No financial impact

### Background:

The Women's Economic Security Act of 2014 is legislation that includes several new initiatives designed to break down barriers to economic progress facing women – and all Minnesotans.

The Women's Economic Security Act was announced at the Women's Economic Summit, which was organized by a diverse coalition of public advocacy groups interested in improving the economic security for women in Minnesota. The Women's Economic Security Summit featured a bipartisan group of legislators, advocates and community leaders who discussed the economic barriers facing women in Minnesota, including:

**Pay equity and wages:** Women make up 50% of Minnesota's workforce, but 58% of workers who are paid \$9.50 or less. And on average, women make 80 cents for every dollar a man makes.

**Job segregation:** Despite the fact that women are earning a majority of post-secondary degrees, they are still clustered in low-wage job sectors. Only 4 percent of women complete two-year construction, mechanical or precision production programs. Women are also underrepresented in the field of computer science. Only 17 percent of computer science bachelor's degrees earned in Minnesota go to women.

**Work-life balance:** Women remain the primary caregiver for children, and for ailing

relatives or parent. But many jobs do not provide flexibility or paid leave. 75% of Minnesotans who provide 20+ hours per week of regular unpaid care to a friend or family member are women.

The Women's Economic Security Act aims to address a range of these economic barriers by:

- Closing the gender pay gap, requiring private businesses that contract with the state to report on pay equity within their workforce.
- Increasing income for working women and their families by increasing the minimum wage to \$9.50.
- Expanding access to high-quality, affordable childcare.
- Expanding family and sick leave for working families, including paid sick and safe leave and expanding unpaid leave under the Minnesota Parental Leave Act.
- Enhance protections for victims of domestic violence.
- Encouraging women in non-traditional, high-wage jobs and support growth for women-owned small businesses.

State Senator Sandy Pappas (DFL – Saint Paul) and State Rep. Carly Melin (DFL-Hibbing) will chief-author the Women's Economic Security Act. Several of the bills will have individual hearings in the coming days.