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2013 FEB 26 AM 11 04
SENATOR PATRICIA JEHLLEN
SECOND MIDDLESEX DISTRICT OF THE CITY CLERK
STATE HOUSE OF MASSACHUSETTS CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS
ROOM 513
BOSTON, MA 02133

February 15, 2013

Donna P. Lopez
Interim City Clerk
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge MA 02138

Dear Cambridge City Clerk & City Council,

I have received your letter and the copy of the City Council resolution 0-7 from February 11, 2013 regarding the Paycheck Fairness Act. I share your support for the assurance of gender pay equity in the workplace.

Nationally in 2011, women earned approximately \$0.82 for every \$1 that a man earned (\$684 per week for women compared to \$832 for men). Projected throughout a full year of work, the median earnings for men were \$43,264 while women's median was only \$35,568. At the current rates, if the number of men equaled the current number of women in the workforce (44.5 million), men would still earn over \$342 billion more per year. The pay gap is closing very slowly and is largely due to a drop in the average wages of men.

As you may know, I am the lead Senate sponsor of *An Act further defining comparable work*. The current law prohibits employers from paying male and female employees different wages "for work of like or comparable character or work on like or comparable operations." However, the law does not define "comparable work." Although the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has addressed "comparable" work, its decision creates further uncertainty by basing the analysis on "important common characteristics" between jobs, without providing guidance on which characteristics should be taken into account.

An Act further defining comparable work aims to eliminate the wage gap between men and women by defining comparable work on three characteristics: skill, effort, and responsibility. The economy will benefit, because closing the wage gap will increase household income, decrease poverty rates, boost savings and pensions, increase consumer spending and reduce the

need for government assistance. Equal pay benefits Massachusetts by helping businesses to stay competitive. Pay adjustments are modest and tend to be phased in over a period of several years.

Thank you for your work towards equal pay across genders. Please feel free to contact me with comments or concerns about this or any other issues in the future.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Jehlen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Patricia Jehlen
State Senator