From: Tara Simmons
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OFFICE OF MAYOR LUKE RAVENSTAHL
CITY OF PITTSBURGH

PRESS RELEASE

MAYOR AND COUNCIL BUILD CONSENSUS ON FUNDING FOR GENDER/RACE PAY EQUITY STUDY

(PITTSBURGH) August 14, 2008 -- Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and Council Members led by Reverend Ricky Burgess, Patrick Dowd, Tonya Payne, Jim Motznik and Dan Deasy today worked together to quickly build consensus to fund the Gender/Race Pay Equity Study.

“Working cooperatively to resolve issues of importance to the people, we quickly found a solution to meet the funding needs for this important study,” Mayor Ravenstahl said. “This is an appropriate way to commemorate the six-month anniversary of our joint pledge for better governance.”

Councilman Jim Motznik added, “"This just goes to show that working together with the Mayor we, as a Council, can accomplish anything."

City Council will put forth $52,039, and the Administration and Women and Girls Foundation will each finance $20,000 to fund the $92,000 study. Council members will introduce the funding measure at this Monday’s Council session.

“The funding of the study demonstrates how the Mayor and City Council can work together for the good of the City,” Reverend Ricky Burgess said. “The study will give the City the data needed to ensure that there is equity in the payment of all City employees and demonstrate if any inequalities exist and if they do, correct them in a legally defensible manner.”

Heather Arnet, the executive director for the Women and Girls Foundation added, “The City is providing a powerful model to other public and private entities as to the active role employers can take in helping to decrease and eliminate our region’s wage gap. This study will serve as a crucial first step in quantifying wage disparities and proposing systemic solutions to help remedy inequities moving forward. Decreasing our city’s gender and racial wage gaps will enable Pittsburgh companies to more effectively recruit and retain the best local and national talent.”

The City government's workforce, 75 percent of whom are men, is indicative of Pittsburgh's challenge to reduce the gender pay gap. Nationally, women make 80 cents per dollar compared with male counterparts. However, in Pittsburgh, the pay equity is lower – with women making less than 70 cents per dollar in our region.

"I have worked since my first day on City Council to create a fair and level playing field for all," said Councilwoman Tonya Payne. "I am proud to be part of the coalition that makes this historic study happen."

Currently, the city utilizes a civil service system to promote fairness in the hiring process. One outcome of the study will be to determine the effectiveness of this system.

The City's Department of Personnel, led by Director Barbara Trant, issued a request for proposal last April, inviting experts to analyze the issue of gender pay equity within the City's male-dominated workforce.

Based on information obtained from the study, Ms. Trant, along with guidance from the Mayor and Council, will decide which tools will produce the most effective results.

"The lesson learned today is simple: put the petty bickering aside," said Councilman Dan Deasy. "We have accomplished more in one day through cooperation with this Administration than we did in 6 months of political grand standing and mud-slinging."

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