

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators
FROM: Senator Christine Tartaglione
DATE: 3/5/2019

SUBJECT: Legislation to expand protection from discrimination to all independent contractors and unpaid interns.

In the near future, I will be re-introducing legislation, formerly SB 1148 in the 2017-18 session, that will amend the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) to expand protection from discrimination based on “race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, national origin or non-job related handicap or disability or the use of a guide or support animal because of the blindness, deafness or physical handicap” to all independent contractors and unpaid interns.

Under the current law, independent contractors are limited to individuals that have a license from the Bureau of Occupational and Professional Affairs and unpaid interns are not considered employees.

Our goal is to create safe, equitable, and accountable workplaces where jobs and opportunities for upward mobility are not leveraged for sex or where people are humiliated based on their background or identity. This legislation is part of a multi-bill package intended to address the all-to-common workplace harassment that continues to be a national issue. The #MeToo movement has fortunately provided many victims the opportunity to bring their stories forward and created momentum for action, but more needs to be done.

This bill will offer the protections afforded to most employees under the act to the entirety of independent contractors and unpaid interns. Please join me in supporting this legislation and help contractors and interns enjoy a discrimination-free environment like other protected workers.