



House of Commons
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Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham

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Sarah Champion MP Celebrates Victory in her Fight for Gender Pay Equality

Sarah Champion, Member of Parliament for Rotherham, says she's delighted that the Government have finally agreed to her gender pay equality measures. It was announced this weekend that companies with over 250 employees will be forced to reveal their pay gap between men and women.

On December 16th 2014, Sarah used her Ten Minute Rule Bill to demand the mandatory publishing of pay gap figures by large companies. In her speech to the Commons she highlighted the current differences in pay; with women earning 81p on average to every pound earned by a man. In Sarah's constituency of Rotherham that figure drops to an average of 77p for every pound. She also pointed out that a voluntary agreement in place had clearly failed, with only 5 companies from thousands actually taking part.

MPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of Sarah's bill and it passed with support from 258 Members, many of whom were Labour. The majority of coalition MPs stayed away from the vote, though 7 Conservatives did vote against the Bill.

The Government have now bowed to pressure and agreed to change the law ahead of a debate on the legislation in the House of Lords this week. The measures which mean firms with over 250 employees must publish their gender pay gap are expected to come into force over the next 12 months.

Discussing the news, Sarah said:

"I am absolutely thrilled that the Government have finally decided to bring in these measures and help women take a big step forward in their fight for equal pay. These changes mean that companies will now be forced to look at the reasons why a pay gap still exists."

"Section 78 was passed by a Labour Government but wasn't followed through by the Coalition. That means that the current Government have wasted 5 years in the fight for equal pay between men and women. They claimed that the arrangement for firms to volunteer the information was working, but only 5 companies from thousands actually opted in. That's not even 0.1% of the total of large businesses across the UK. By making it mandatory to publish those figures women will be able to challenge decisions on pay and achieve the parity they deserve."

"We should not still be fighting this campaign in 2015, equal pay should be standard. It was almost 50 years ago that the women of Ford Dagenham held their historic strike and 45 years since the Equal Pay Act 1970 was passed. Hopefully now the promise of pay equality will start to become a reality."

ENDS

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