

Rep Maureen Madden

House Labor and Industry Hearing

April 24, 2018

The Me Too Movement has awakened all of us to the devastating nature of sexual harassment and discrimination that can occur in workplaces across the Commonwealth.

My legislation, HB 2280, would ensure that all workers, even in companies with fewer than four employees, are safeguarded.

Small companies, and the employees that are instrumental in making those companies successful, are at the heart Pennsylvania's economy.

For far too long, we have left these hardworking employees vulnerable.

The idea that any employee would have to be subjected to sexual harassment, discrimination, or intimidation in the workplace is unconscionable. Victims of workplace sexual harassment and discrimination are traumatized, and in many cases scarred for life.

Currently, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) treats sexual harassment as a form of discrimination based on sex. Unfortunately, the PHRA only applies to employers with four or more employees.

This definition fails to cover all businesses in the state and thereby leaves thousands of employees without legal protections against sexual harassment and discrimination. My legislation will amend the PHRA to say that for instances of discrimination based on sex, an employer is an entity that employs one or more persons.

According to the 2015 census, there are approximately 153,000 companies with four or fewer employees.

My legislation would expand protection to include approximately 314,000 more workers across the commonwealth. Estimate an additional cost \$145,000 per year for PAHRC. The PAHRC estimates they would need 2 more full-time employees to handle the additional cases at an estimated additional cost of \$145,000 per year annually.

Supporting the governor's executive budget proposal for the commission would address any costs arising from HB 2280.

Thank you.

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