



August 17th, 2023

Statement from Hannah Trueblood Decrying Allegations of Wage and Gender Discrimination in Valparaiso City Hall

The gender wage gap in America causes women, on average, to make 17% less than men for comparable work. In Indiana, the gap is significantly higher, with Hoosier women earning 22% less than men. A wage study conducted in 2022 determined that female Valparaiso employees were paid on average 31% less than the men. Wage discrimination is illegal, it's detrimental to our economy and families, and it happens far too often.

On Tuesday August 15th, 2023, Kathy Lynn Gralik - the city's former HR director - filed a lawsuit against the City of Valparaiso, Mayor Matt Murphy, and previous city administrator Mike Jessen on counts of gender & wage discrimination, FMLA interference, violations of the 1st & 14th amendments, and defamation. Gralik alleges that in addition to paying female employees significantly less than their male counterparts, the city and its administration created hostile work environments for women and removed her from her position in retaliation for calling out their illegal actions.

The suit claims that the Mayor hired his cousin's company to conduct an HR Department audit. Allegedly, the audit was riddled with falsified information, which was used to justify her demotion - and eventual elimination of her position. The full court document can be found at <https://hannahformayor.com/lawsuit>

If proven true, these allegations reflect a long standing system of disrespect and disregard for female employees in a city where 52% of the population is female.

The current mayor accused of these blatantly discriminatory practices was handpicked by my opponent, the former mayor, as his replacement. Four years later, the current mayor is running for a city council seat, again with the full backing and support of my opponent. If proven true, the former mayor, who is running to be mayor again, will also have participated in discriminatory pay practices during his tenure, even though he is not named in this lawsuit.

This is why representation matters in all levels of government. In every generation, women have fought for more inclusion and equity, building on the advances of previous generations. I am only able to run for mayor because I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me. We cannot move forward by looking backward.

In a time when our first responders are paid below the state average, our streets and sidewalks are crumbling, our neighborhoods are flooding, and our downtown is not handicapped accessible, we cannot afford the cost of gender discrimination.

As mayor, I will ensure City Hall provides a safe and healthy work environment. I will spearhead the implementation of policies to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion in every department. I will work with the city council to eradicate the gender pay gap entirely. In a Trueblood Administration, we will invest in our people, in our future, and not have to spend our precious tax dollars defending the indefensible.