

# VOTING & ELECTIONS

## FACT SHEET

### **Why Women Should Vote: To Make the Economy Work for Women and Families**

July 2012

*The recovery from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression is progressing slowly, especially for women – and women were more economically vulnerable than men even before the recession started. By voting, women can make sure our elected leaders prioritize investments that will help women and their families through hard times, expand opportunity, and strengthen the economy. By voting, women can also support a fair tax system to provide the resources needed for those investments.*

#### **Women are struggling to support their families.**

- Although men fared worse during the recession (December 2007 to June 2009), women have fared worse during the recovery. From the start of the recovery to June 2012, women gained just 20 percent of the nearly 2.6 million jobs added to the economy. In June 2012, the unemployment rate for adult women was 7.4 percent; for adult men, it was 7.8 percent.
- Women make up nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers. A woman working full time, year round at the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour earns just \$14,500 – more than \$3,000 below the poverty line for a family of three.
- In 2010, women were either breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of families with children.
- The typical woman working full time, year round is paid only 77 cents for every dollar paid to her male counterpart.

- In 2010, more than one in seven adult women, over 17.2 million, lived in poverty. More than four in ten female-headed families with children lived in poverty.

#### **Policy makers will make decisions that are critical to women's economic security for the short and long term.**

- Cuts in funding for public services have eliminated public sector jobs and slowed the recovery, especially for women. Women's job loss in the public sector has kept their unemployment rates high throughout the recovery. Policy makers will decide whether to keep making cuts that cost jobs or to invest in job creation—putting teachers back in the classroom and others who serve our communities back to work.
- Child care assistance, job training, tuition assistance, and affordable health care: these are just some of the services that help women make ends meet and get ahead. Policy makers will decide whether to cut these and other vital supports or strengthen them.

- Courts have opened loopholes in the laws that guarantee equal pay for equal work. Congress will decide whether to close those loopholes to make it easier for women to discover and challenge pay discrimination, or allow the promise of fair pay to slip further away.
- Congress has raised the minimum wage only three times in the past 30 years. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, it would be over \$10.50 an hour. Raising the minimum wage would boost the earnings of millions of women and, because women are a large majority of minimum wage workers, help close the wage gap between men and women.
- Although many programs serving women and their families have been cut in the name of deficit reduction, millionaires and corporations have not been required to contribute a dime of additional revenue. By letting tax cuts that benefit only the wealthiest two percent of Americans expire at the end of 2012 instead of extending them, by ensuring that millionaires pay at least at the same tax rate as many middle class families, and by closing corporate tax loopholes that allow many of the nation's largest corporations to pay no federal income tax at all, policy makers could make the tax system fairer. These reforms would also raise hundreds of billions of dollars that could be used to make the kinds of investments that create jobs and improve our communities, while bringing down deficits in a fair and responsible way.

**When women vote, leaders listen.**

**REGISTER. VOTE.**

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