

VOTING & ELECTIONS

FACT SHEET

Why Women Should Vote: To Obtain Equal Pay And Job Opportunities

May 2012

The typical full-time woman worker still makes only 77 cents for every dollar paid to the typical man, and women still face a glass ceiling in their efforts to reach the highest positions in their fields. Women and their families cannot afford the pay gap or other job discrimination, especially in this economy. By voting, women can make sure elected officials hold employers accountable for treating women fairly in the workplace.

Many women don't earn enough to stay afloat, let alone to get ahead.

- Women are nearly two-thirds of minimum-wage workers. The current minimum wage is insufficient to keep a single woman with children out of poverty even if she works full-time, year-round.
- Women are almost two-thirds of workers in tipped occupations. The tipped minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour and hasn't been raised in twenty years.
- Women are over-represented in some of the lowest-paying fields and are still left out of many that pay a higher wage. Child care workers, 96 percent of whom are women, earn less per week than automotive service technicians and mechanics, 98 percent of whom are male.

Women still don't receive equal pay for equal work.

- Lower wages harm women and the families that rely on their earnings, particularly in a difficult economy. Because the typical woman working full-time, year-round is paid only about 77 cents for every dollar paid to the typical man, she has 23 percent less to spend

on groceries, housing, and child care. The pay gap means the typical woman had to work until April 2012 to make what the typical man made by the end of 2011.

- Women of color fare even worse: African-American women are paid only 62 cents, and Latinas only 54 cents, for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
- An earnings gap exists between women and men in many different kinds of jobs. In 2010, out of 265 major occupations, women's median salary only exceeded men's in one: personal care workers, a group that includes shoeshiners, housesitters, and butlers.
- Just one year out of college, women working full time already earn less than their male colleagues, even when they work in the same field. By ten years after graduation, the pay gap has widened.
- About 61 percent of private-sector workers are forbidden or discouraged from sharing information about their wages. It is impossible to know that you are being paid less than your co-worker if you have no idea what your co-worker is paid.

- Equal pay laws have been weakened over time by courts, making it more difficult to prevent and battle pay discrimination.

Women continue to experience discrimination and other obstacles as a result of pregnancy and parenting.

- Many employers refuse to make minor adjustments that would allow women experiencing pregnancy symptoms to continue to do their jobs—such as allowing a cashier to sit on a stool rather than stand for her shift. Many courts have found employers have no legal obligation to make these adjustments.
- Mothers tend to be paid less than fathers or childless women even when they are doing the same work.
- The United States is the only industrialized country in the world that does not guarantee any paid family leave.
- Even worse, more than forty percent of workers in the private sector— and more than eighty percent of low-wage workers — do not have a single paid sick

day available to care for themselves. Even fewer can take a paid sick day to care for a sick child or family member. Employers have no obligation under federal law to provide any paid sick days.

Sexual harassment constricts women’s employment opportunities.

- Particularly in occupations where few women work, many women face regular harassment as the price of doing their job. The threat of harassment can deter women from even entering these often more lucrative lines of work.

Women need effective tools to fight employment discrimination.

- Current law fails to provide adequate deterrence and sufficient tools to address the widespread discrimination and obstacles women face in the workplace. Elected officials will decide whether to strengthen these laws and promote women’s employment opportunities.

When women vote, leaders listen.

REGISTER. VOTE.

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