



**CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
WOMEN'S POLICY FORUM, FEBRUARY 19, 2002
"THE PRICE OF MOTHERHOOD"**

Facts About Mothers in America

Mothers in America and around the world continue to experience inequality, discrimination, and perhaps most tragically, increased poverty. The following facts reveal how, despite popular rhetoric and recent trends which suggest that men are more likely to contribute to childrearing and household chores, women continue to disproportionately bear the responsibilities of domestic work and childcare, while also working full or part-time jobs:

Workforce

- According to the AFL-CIO, 71.9 percent of women with children younger than 18, 77.9 percent of women with children between the ages of 6 and 17, 64.8 percent of women with children younger than 6 were in the labor force in 1997.¹
- 70 percent of part-time workers are female.²
- Women account for 85 percent of the total increase between 1989 and 1995 in the number of workers with more than one job. 47 percent of all multiple jobholders in 1995 were women.³
- Women are projected to account for more than half of the net growth in the labor force between 1998 and 2008. 9.7 million women are projected to enter the labor force between 1998 and 2008.⁴

Poverty

- In 1997, 12.8 million families were maintained by women, representing 18.2 percent of all families, compared with 5.6 million or 10.8 percent of all families in 1970.⁵
- In 2000 there were 72,574,000 families in the United States of which 13,148,000 were families maintained by women, 18.1 percent or slightly less than 1 in 5 families.⁶
- 24.7 percent of female headed households with no husband present live in poverty, in comparison to 4.7 percent of married couple households.⁷
- When women are poor, children are poor. 14,113,067 or 19.9 percent of all children in America live below the poverty level.⁸
- If single working mothers earned as much as comparable men, their family incomes would increase nearly 17 percent, and their poverty rates would be cut in half, from 25 percent to 12.6 percent.⁹
- If married women were paid the same as comparable men, their family incomes would rise by nearly 6 percent, and their families' poverty rates would fall from 2.1 to .08 percent.¹⁰

Wage Disparity

- In 1999, the Department of Labor Women's Bureau reported that the median annual earning for year round full-time work for women was \$26,324 compared to \$36,476 for men. Thus, the ratio of women's earnings to men's was 72.2 percent.¹¹
- In 2000, women's median hourly earnings were 83.2 percent of men's earnings for hourly wages.¹²
- In 2000, women's median weekly earnings were 76.0 percent of men's earnings for full-time wage and salary workers.¹³
- In 1999, California women's median weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary work was 84.3 percent of California men's.
- In 2001, the percentage of board seats held by women in Fortune 500 companies was 12.4.¹⁴
- Only 16 percent of law firms have female partners.¹⁵
- While 95 percent of law firms have policies that allow part time work, only 3 percent of lawyers actually work part-time.¹⁶

Unpaid Work

- The United Nations Human Development Report 1995 estimated that women spend 2/3 of their working hours on unpaid work, and most of those hours are spent on caring work.
- It is estimated that if women's unpaid work was counted, it would contribute 11 trillion dollars to the world economy.¹⁷
- Women's unremunerated work in the United States is valued at 1,491 billion dollars a year.¹⁸

RESOURCES

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- ¹ <http://www.aflcio.org/women/wwfacts/htm> citing U.S. Department of Labor, *Employment Characteristics of families in 1997, 1998*.
- ² <http://www.aflcio.org/women/wwfacts/htm> citing AFL-CIO analysis of Current Population Survey, February 1997.
- ³ <http://www.aflcio.org/women/wwfacts/htm> citing Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein and John Schmitt, *The State of Working America 1996-97*, Economic Policy Institute, 1996.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Labor Force Highlights*.
- ⁵ <http://www.aflcio.org/women/wwfact/htm> citing Ken Bryson and Lynne M. Casper, *Household and Family Characteristics: March 1997*, P20-509, Bureau of the Census, April 1998; Bureau of the Census, Table F-7. Type of Family--Families (All Races) by Median and Mean income: 1947 to 1996, www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/f07.html.
- ⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Labor Force Highlights*.
- ⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1994 and 2001.
- ⁸ 2000 Children's Defense Fund, *State Rankings: 2001 Children in the States*.
- ⁹ <http://www.aflcio.org/women/exec99/htm>, *Equal Pay for Working Families: National and State Data on the Pay Gap and Its Costs*.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.aflcio.org/women/exec99/htm>, *Equal Pay for Working Families: National and State Data on the Pay Gap and Its Costs*
- ¹¹ http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs/achart.htm. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series p-60, selected issues.
- ¹² U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Labor Force Highlights*.
- ¹³ U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Labor Force Highlights*.
- ¹⁴ <http://www.catalystwomen.org/Research/CENSUSES.htm>.
- ¹⁵ Carol Kleiman, *Women Lawyers Still Find Bar Often Higher For Them*, seattletimes.com, Sunday, January 13, 2002 (2002 Chicago Tribune, Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News).
- ¹⁶ American Bar Association Commission of Women in the Profession, *Balanced Lives, Changing Culture of Legal Practice*, 2001.
- ¹⁷ United Nations Human Development Report, 1995.
- ¹⁸ International Wages for Housework campaign citing United States Department of Commerce.