



DPCC Fact Check: Republican Myths About the Gender Pay Gap

Republicans are continuing their campaign to turn back the clock on women's rights - including equal pay for equal work. Republicans repeatedly voted against efforts to address the wage gap like the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#), which Democrats were able to pass, and the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#). As part of their ongoing effort to dismiss women's legitimate concerns about pay inequity, Republicans continue to make false claims about women's earnings in the labor market.

False Claim # 1 – Women Earn The Same Money As Men – Any Difference Can Be Accounted For By Factors Other Than Gender.

FACT – Women Earn Less Than Men Regardless of Any Other Factor, Including Age, Education, and Occupation.

- **Women earn 77 cents for every dollar a man earns.** According to the most recent Census data, the average woman who worked full-time, year-round earned only 77 cents to the average man's dollar in 2010. The gender pay gap is even greater for older women, with women over 50 earning only 75 cents to every dollar earned by their male equivalents. *Find state data on gender pay gap [here](#).* [[Census](#), accessed on 5/3/12; [JEC](#), 10/10]
- **Gender pay gap persists across all occupations and educational levels.** Research clearly demonstrates that regardless of occupation, education, industry, marital status, and other factors, pay for women lags behind their male counterparts. In 19 of the 20 most common occupations for women, and in 19 of the most 20 common occupations for men, women's pay lags behind their male counterparts. [[JEC](#), 10/10; [IWPR](#), 4/12]
- **Women earn less starting the moment they graduate.** College-educated women who have been out of college for one year earned 5 percent less than college-educated men who had also been out of college for one year, after controlling for all factors known to affect earnings (including education and training, continuity, job and workplace, employment experience, and demographic characteristics). [[AAUW](#), 2007]
 - The pay gap widens the longer women and men are in the workplace; 10 years after graduation, college-educated women are making 12 percent less than their college-educated male peers. [[AAUW](#), 2007]

- **Women lose \$434,000 in income, on average, throughout their career.** On average, women earn \$434,000 less over a 40-year period, with the pay gap accumulating throughout their career because “pay raises are typically given as a percent of current salary, leaving women further behind each year.” Women with the highest education lose more throughout their career - \$713,000 for a woman with a college degree or higher, compared to \$270,000 for a woman who did not finish high school. [[CAP](#), 3/11/10]

False Claim # 2 – Difference In Pay Is A Result Of Employment Choices, With Men More Likely To Work In High Paying Professions.

FACT – Gender Pay Gap Persists Across Nearly All Occupations, Especially The Highest Paying Jobs.

- **Women Earn Less Than Men in Nearly All Occupations.** According to a Bloomberg analysis of U.S. Census data, women’s median earnings are less than men’s median earnings in 264 of 265 major occupation categories. Women working in the personal care and service worker category are the only exception, making only 2 cents more to every dollar made by men. [[Bloomberg](#), 3/16/12]
- **Women Earn Less Than Men in All The Highest Paying Occupations.** Women earn significantly less than men in all of the highest paying occupation, including as:
 - physicians and surgeons, earning 71% of their male counterpart’s salaries;
 - CEOs, earning 72% of their male counterpart’s salaries;
 - Lawyers, earning 77% of their male counterpart’s salaries;
 - Computer and information systems managers, earning 82% of their male counterpart’s salaries. [[IWPR](#), 4/11]
- **Women Face Barriers to Earning the Equivalent of Men, Failing To Reach The Highest Pay Bracket In The Workplace.** Across all occupations, women face significant barriers to reach the highest pay bracket in their place of employment.
 - Although women comprise nearly half of all Fortune 500 employees, they make up 15.7% of board seats, 14.4% of executive officers, and 2.4% of CEOs. With six jobs with the largest gender gap in pay in the financial sector, industry executives admit, “We don’t see the pay gap closing... it’s persistent.” [[Bloomberg](#), 3/16/12; [JEC](#), 10/10]

False Claim # 3 – Difference In Pay Is A Result Of Men Working 44 Hours Per Week Versus Women Working 41 Hours Per Week.

FACT – Differences in Hours Worked Do Not Account for the Entire Gender Wage Gap.

- **Differences in hours worked does not impact starting salaries.** For example, according to research, starting-salary disparities between male and female physicians cannot be explained by difference in hours worked. [[Health Affairs](#), 2/7/11]

- **Research suggests that differences in hours worked accounts for a small part of the gender wage gap.** Part-time employees are paid an average of 58 cents on the dollar compared to the hourly wages of their full-time counterparts. Since women are more likely to work as part-time employees, the difference in hours worked can exacerbate the existing gender wage gap. Accounting for these factors, the Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates that the pay disparity only drops to 72%. [[Examiner](#), 4/30/12 (waiting for citation from IWPR)]

Paycheck Fairness Act Is Necessary To Address The Gender Pay Gap.

- **Gender pay gap results from discriminatory pay practices.** Research clearly demonstrates the existence of gender pay gaps, regardless of age, occupation, education, marital status, and other factors. Nearly half of the gender pay gap results from factors other than these, with discriminatory practices remaining a problem in today's workforce. [[CAP](#), 3/11/10; [GAO](#), 10/31/03; [JEC](#), 10/10]
- **Ensuring equal pay for equal work benefits the entire economy.** With women earning 77 cents to every dollar men earn, fewer dollars are available to go back into the economy as consumer spending. Congressional action aimed at protecting against gender wage discrimination is critical to both promoting fair pay and ensuring economic growth in the future. [[JEC](#), 10/10]
- **The Paycheck Fairness Act will address the gender pay gap.** The Paycheck Fairness Act prohibits employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information. As a result, employees will have access to information that will improve their salary negotiation skills and help women achieve greater pay parity with men. In order to further identify and respond to wage discrimination, the bill makes critical investments in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- **Contrary to false GOP claims, the Paycheck Fairness Act will not result in a pay cut for men.** Under current law it is illegal to remedy wage discrimination by reducing the wages of other employees, and "the objective of equal pay legislation... is not to drag down men workers to the wage levels of women, but to raise women to the levels enjoyed by men in cases where discrimination is still practiced." Furthermore, equal pay is not only a women's issue, as millions of families rely on a women's paycheck for their family's earnings. For this reason, over 300 organizations, including the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, have supported the legislation. [[JEC](#), 10/10; *Corning Glass*, 417 U.S. at 207]
- **Women cannot wait for equal pay.** According to the National Partnership for Women & Families, the pay gap has been narrowing by one-half of a cent every year since 1963. Without Congressional action, women will not achieve pay parity with men until in 2056. American families cannot wait any longer. [[NPWF](#), 4/11]