



To: Interested Parties

**From: Page Gardner, The Voter Participation Center
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Re: Equal Pay Day for Unmarried Women¹

Date: April 3, 2017

54 years after the Equal Pay Act was signed into law, women are still fighting to earn the same earnings as men for equal work. This year on April 4, 2017, Equal Pay Day will symbolize how far into the year the typical woman must work to earn what men earned in 2016. In other words, women will have to work 15 months and 4 days to earn what men made in just 12 months – that is an additional 94 days. According to the most recent data on 2016 available from the U.S. Census Bureau, for every \$1.00 the average man earns, the average woman is paid only \$0.80. Earning disparities are even greater for unmarried women. For every \$1.00 the average man earns, the average unmarried woman is paid only \$0.71. Furthermore, for every \$1.00 the average *married* man is paid, the average unmarried woman is paid only \$0.59. That means that the average unmarried woman has to work until May 31, 2017 just to make the same as the average man did in 2016, and until September 11, 2017 to make the same as the average married man did in 2016.

Unmarried women have seen a steady three year decline on their earnings in comparison to married men. That is because married men have seen their total earnings steadily increase each year, while unmarried women have only seen their total earnings remain stagnant or just slightly increase. Unmarried women now earn only 59 cents to every dollar a married man earns. This is a drop of 4 cents as compared to the 2015 and 2014 disparities of 63 cents, and a decrease of 5 cents from the 64 cents earned on the dollar in 2013². This decline highlights the ever-consistent pattern of unmarried women being left behind, even in a growing and improving economy. In short, there have been no real substantive gains for women. In fact, equal wages is seeing a backwards trend, while married men continue to see their earning power grow.

¹ These disparities have a variety of causes that we cannot control for with this data including education, industry, and comparable work.

² Based on median income earnings. U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey March 2016
<http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps ftp.html>

President Obama met fierce Republican resistance in his efforts to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. With President Donald Trump in office and full Republican control of Congress, it is certain that no such legislative effort will be seriously pursued. In fact, having the Trump administration and the current Congress in power is likely to lead to further setbacks for women demanding fair pay relative to men. It will be important to send a message to elected officials that the gender pay gap is indeed real and growing— especially for unmarried women, women of color, and single mothers. Addressing the reality of this problem is a first step for some, while coming to creative solutions to solve the problem is crucial for all.

Personal Earnings

According to the most recent 2016 wage data from the Census Bureau (figure 1), women’s earnings were 80% of men’s: women’s median annual earnings in 2016 were \$40,000, compared to men’s \$50,000. Women of color face much wider disparities.

Figure 1: Personal Earnings among Full-Time Workers, 2016³

	Men	Women	White Women	African American Women	Latinas	Asian American Women	Native American Women	Unmarried Women with Own Children Under 18
Median Annual Income	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$43,000	\$35,000	\$30,000	\$48,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Comparative Personal Earnings	\$1.00	80¢	86¢	70¢	60¢	96¢	60¢	60¢

Despite an improving economy, more jobs and lower unemployment, there are only a few signs of positive growth for earnings among women. White women still do better than African American women and Latinas. White women’s income improved from 82 cents on the dollar in 2015 to 86 cents in 2016, while African American women improved from 66 cents on the dollar in 2015 to 70 cents in 2016, and Latinas’ income remained consistent at just 60 cents. Native American women also earned just 60 cents for every dollar a man made. Asian American women continue to experience the smallest pay gap relative to men at 96 cents on the dollar—an improvement from 90 cents in 2015. Despite slight increases in earnings for some groups of women, the rate of these increases in no way matches that of men’s, especially married men’s.

³ Income is calculated based on personal earnings of all people age 15 and older, who worked full time and year round. This is a change from previous years, where we reported total personal income, not just earnings.

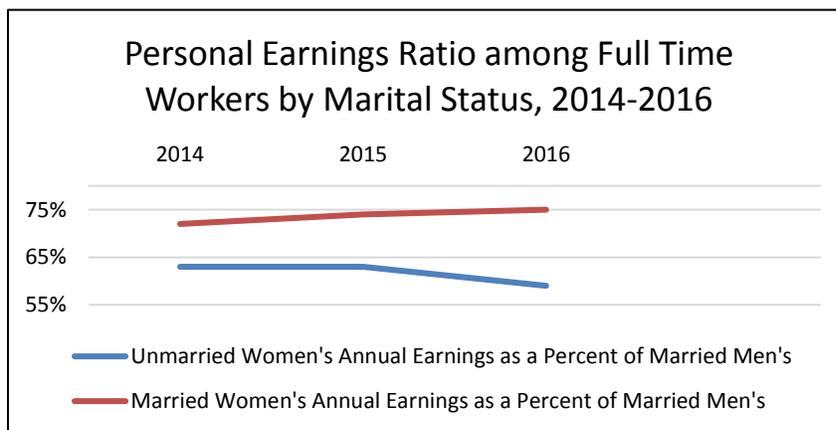
Marital Status

The earnings gap is even wider when examining marital status. Unmarried women make far less than married and unmarried men and lag behind married women. Figure 2 demonstrates that in 2016, unmarried women earned \$35,360, compared to unmarried men who earned \$40,000. Unmarried women also earned \$9,640 less than married women (\$45,000) and significantly less than married men (\$60,000). These differences have only grown larger compared to 2015.

Earnings for unmarried women is a serious problem that has not improved with time, even as the economy has picked up. In fact, the median annual income for unmarried women has barely increased since 2015 and their pay relative to married men has fallen precipitously. **In 2015, they earned \$35,000 and 63 cents for every dollar a married man made, whereas in 2016, unmarried women made nominally more at \$35,360 but just 59 cents on the dollar relative to married men.** By way of contrast, income among married women has increased from \$41,600 in 2015 (74 cents on the dollar compared to married men) to \$45,000, which now represents 75 cents on the dollar.

Figure 2: Personal Earnings among Full-Time Workers by Marital Status, 2016⁴

	Women		Men	
	Unmarried	Married	Unmarried	Married
Median Annual Income	\$35,360	\$45,000	\$40,000	\$60,000
Comparative Personal Earnings	59¢	75¢	67¢	\$1.00



Racial disparities in income are evident among unmarried women as Figure 3 highlights. Unmarried white women make 65 cents for every dollar a married man makes, unmarried Asian American women make only 68 cents, while African American unmarried women make only 57 cents, unmarried Native American women make only 50 cents, and unmarried Latinas make only 48 cents. While many groups of unmarried women made some income gains in the past year, among no

⁴ Ibid

racial subgroup does their income relative to men exceed 68 cents on the dollar, a figure in itself that shows a lack of progress for unmarried women as a whole.

Figure 3: Personal Earnings among Full-Time Workers by Marital Status and Race, 2016⁵

	Married Men	Unmarried Women					
		Total	White	African American	Latina	Asian American	Native American
Median Annual Income	\$60,000	\$35,360	\$39,001	\$34,000	\$29,000	\$41,000	\$30,000
Comparative Personal Earnings	\$1.00	59¢	65¢	57¢	48¢	68¢	50¢

There is also a significant earnings gap among white working class women, especially for unmarried women. Married white working class women make 58 cents for every dollar a married man makes, while unmarried white working class women make only 52 cents. This is a decline from 2015, when they made 54 cents to every dollar.

Figure 4: Personal Earnings among Full-Time Workers by Marital Status, Race and Class, 2016⁶

	Married Men	Working Class White Women		
		Total	Married	Unmarried
Median Annual Income	\$60,000	\$34,000	\$35,001	\$31,000
Comparative Personal Earnings	\$1.00	57¢	58¢	52¢

Single Mothers Continue to Earn Less than Married Mothers

In 2016, single moms earned just HALF as much as married men; just 50 cents to every dollar, down from 54 cents the prior year. Unmarried women with younger children face a more significant pay gap, earning \$32,000 less than a married man and just 47 cents to every dollar.

Single mothers (children under 18) have seen no income gains going back to 2013, while married men are now earning \$4,500 more per year, continuing the pattern of unequal pay affecting this demographic the most. Conversely, married mothers saw their income rise by \$2,000. The pay gap between married mothers with children and single mothers is greater than ever, further proving the fact that unmarried

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

mothers suffer the most from unequal pay—especially unmarried mothers of young children.

Figure 5: Personal Earnings by Parental Status, 2016⁷

	Married Men	Unmarried Women			Married Women				
	Total	Total	Without Own Children Under 18	With Own Children Under 18	With Own Children Under 6	Total	Without Own Children Under 18	With Own Children Under 18	With Own Children Under 6
Annual Average	\$60,000	\$35,360	\$38,000	\$30,000	\$28,000	\$45,000	\$43,000	\$45,000	\$45,500
Comparative Personal Earnings	\$1.00	59¢	63¢	50¢	47¢	75¢	72¢	75¢	76¢

Real Consequences of Unequal Pay

As the data demonstrates, the gender pay gap is real and is affecting the lives of millions across the country. Race, class, and parental status impact earnings even further. As policy advocates continue to fight for equal pay for equal work, this evidence and data should be used to further demonstrate the severity of the issue, especially where women are concerned:

- When asked about the greatest causes of stress, having enough money to meet bills and expenses is the biggest source of stress for all Americans, but women especially. 59% of women say this compared to 48% of men.⁸
- Younger women, unmarried women and minority women are more economically stressed – 72% of Millennial women list having enough money to meet bills and expenses as their biggest worry, as do 69% of unmarried women and 76% of minority women.⁹
- Women of every demographic are also more concerned than men when it comes to a number of different areas including losing their job (62% vs. 49%), affording retirement (69% vs. 58%), and affording healthcare (62% to 47%).¹⁰

Some politicians and policy makers refuse to acknowledge or act on the pay gap, putting them directly at odds with a majority of Americans who not only believe

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research survey: telephone interviews Dec.7-10, 2015, with a random sample of 1,000 registered voters, including an oversample of 200 Millennial women. M.O.E. +/- 3.0%

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research survey: telephone interviews March 18-22, 2015, with a random sample of 1,010 adults. M.O.E. +/- 3.0%

such a gap exists, but want to take steps to close it. Politicians need to understand how eliminating the pay gap would help families, children, and our economy.

- Low incomes for unmarried mothers hurt children since more than one-quarter of all such families are poor, and half of all families with children include a mother who is the sole or primary earner for the family. Closing the pay gap for these women would slash the poverty rate for these families nearly in half.¹¹
- Our economy would suffer without the contributions of women in the work force. The increase in hours and labor participation rates among women over the past 30 years has resulted in a U.S. economy that is \$2 trillion dollars larger today than it otherwise would have been without their increased contributions.¹²
- Boosting the incomes of women would lead directly to increased consumer spending, spurring demand and leading to greater economic growth. In fact, OECD projections show the U.S. economy would be 5% larger by 2030 if we eliminated the wage gap.¹³

When it comes to elections, candidates' stance on the wage gap and relating issues can play a significant role in voters' choices:

- When asked which issues would impact a voter's likelihood of voting for a candidate, women elevate equal pay for equal work as the policy that would make them most likely to support a candidate for office (81%). Even a majority (64%) of men agree with this. This is a popular issue that crosses party lines.¹⁴
- A majority of people also say that they are more likely to support a candidate who supports: paid sick days (71% overall – 67% men, 75% women), paid family and medical leave (64% overall – 58% men, 69% women), and providing tax credits and subsidies to help working parents pay for childcare (61% overall – 56% men, 66% women).¹⁵

Unequal wages affect the lives of millions of families and have an unfair adverse effect on women, especially unmarried women, women of color, and single mothers. This makes the fight for equal pay that much more important to bring to the spotlight.

¹¹ "Gender Pay Inequality: Consequences for Women, Families, and the Economy," Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, April 2016.

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research survey: telephone interviews Dec.7-10, 2015, with a random sample of 1,000 registered voters, including an oversample of 200 Millennial women. M.O.E. +/- 3.0%

¹⁵ Ibid