Virginia Women and the Wage Gap

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In Virginia, a woman who holds a full-time job is paid, on average, $41,104 per year while a man who holds a full-time job is paid $52,125 per year. **This means that women in Virginia are paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to men, amounting to a yearly wage gap of $11,021 between men and women who work full time in the state.**

Nationally, women who hold jobs full time, year round are paid, on average, just 77 cents for every dollar paid to men. For women of color, the wage gap is larger. On average, African American women are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid just 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

What Does the Wage Gap Mean for Virginia Women?

On average, Virginia women who are employed full time lose a combined total of approximately $14,173,942,785 every year due to the wage gap. Families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result. These lost wages mean families have less money to spend on goods and services that help drive economic growth.

For example, if the wage gap were eliminated, on average, a working woman in Virginia would have enough money for approximately:
- 93 more weeks of food for her family (1.8 years’ worth);
- Nearly seven more months of mortgage and utilities payments;
- More than 10 more months of rent; or
- 3,382 additional gallons of gas.

Virginia Women and Families Cannot Afford Discrimination and Lower Wages

**Virginia women are responsible for the economic security of their families.**
- In the United States today, mothers are primary or sole breadwinners in nearly 40 percent of families, and married mothers are the primary or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of families. That means women’s wages are key to their families’ ability to make ends meet and get ahead.
- 376,201 family households in Virginia are headed by women. About 27 percent of those families, or 100,069 family households, have incomes that fall below the poverty level.
Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to women whose wages sustain their households.

The Wage Gap Cannot Be Explained By Personal Choices

- **The wage gap persists regardless of industry.** In the civilian industries that employ the most full-time employees – health care and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade, and educational services – women are consistently paid less than men. In the health care and social assistance industry, women are paid just 71 cents for every dollar paid to men. In manufacturing, just 73 cents. In retail trade, 76 cents. And in educational services, women are paid 86 cents for every dollar paid to men. Across all industries, women are paid lower salaries than men.\(^1\)

- **The wage gap is present within occupations.** Among the occupations with the most people working full time, year round nationally – sales, production, management, and office and administrative support – women are paid less than men. In sales, women are paid just 64 cents for every dollar paid to men. In production, just 67 cents. In management, 77 cents. And in office and administrative support occupations, women are paid just 86 cents for every dollar paid to men.\(^2\)

- **The wage gap exists regardless of education level.** Educational attainment alone will not eliminate the wage gap. Nationally, women with master’s degrees working full time, year round are paid just 70 cents for every dollar paid to men with master’s degrees. Further, among full-time, year-round workers, women with doctoral degrees are paid less than men with master’s degrees, and women with master’s degrees are paid less than men with bachelor’s degrees.\(^3\)

- **Experts warn that the wage gap will not close in most women’s lifetimes.** If change continues at the same slow pace as it has during the last 50 years, it will take nearly 50 more years – until 2058 – for women and men to finally reach pay parity.\(^4\)

The Public Overwhelmingly Supports Fair Pay Policies

- **Nearly half of likely voters in the United States (49 percent) believe that the wage gap has a major impact on the U.S. economy as a whole.**\(^5\)

- **More than two-thirds of U.S. voters (68 percent) favor policies that would address gender discrimination, including paying women less than men for the same work.** Less than one-quarter of voters oppose such a proposal. Both women (72 percent) and men (64 percent) say they are supportive.\(^6\)

- **Nearly two-thirds of voters support the Paycheck Fairness Act.** In a 2014 nationwide survey, 62 percent of likely voters said they supported the Paycheck Fairness Act, a federal proposal that would help combat wage discrimination. Support crosses demographic and ideological lines, with 83 percent of Democrats, 58 percent of independents and 44 percent of Republican voters saying they support the Paycheck Fairness Act.\(^7\)
The margin of error for the sample as a whole is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

Ibid.

Ibid.

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at www.NationalPartnership.org.

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