

# Massachusetts Women and the Wage Gap

APRIL 2013

In Massachusetts, on average, a woman who holds a full-time job is paid \$46,185 per year while a man who holds a full-time job is paid \$60,264 per year. **This means that women in Massachusetts are paid 77 cents for every dollar paid to men, amounting to a yearly gap of \$14,079 between men and women who work full time in the state.**<sup>1</sup>

Nationally, women who hold full-time, year-round jobs are paid, on average, just 77 cents for every dollar paid to men.<sup>2</sup> African American women are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid just 55 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.<sup>3</sup>

## What Does the Wage Gap Mean for Massachusetts Women?

As a group, women who are employed full time in Massachusetts lose approximately \$13,353,382,419 every year due to the wage gap.<sup>4</sup> If the wage gap were eliminated, a working woman in Massachusetts would have enough money for approximately:

- ▶ 108 more weeks of food (2.1 years' worth);<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ Seven more months of mortgage and utilities payments;<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ 14 more months of rent;<sup>7</sup> or
- ▶ 3,837 additional gallons of gas.<sup>8</sup>

## Massachusetts Women and Families Cannot Afford Discrimination and Lower Wages

**Massachusetts women are responsible for the economic security of their families.**

- ▶ 324,029 households in Massachusetts are headed by women.<sup>9</sup> About 26 percent of those households, or 82,951 households, have incomes that fall below the poverty level.<sup>10</sup> Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to women whose salaries are of critical importance to them and their families.

## Congress Must Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act

**The economic security of women and families is put at risk when women are paid less than men.** The Paycheck Fairness Act would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and help women fight wage discrimination. The Paycheck Fairness Act would:

- ▶ Prohibit employers from retaliating against workers who discuss salaries with colleagues;
- ▶ Put gender-based discrimination on equal footing with other forms of wage discrimination – such as race or national origin – and allow women to take legal action for damages;
- ▶ Require employers to prove that pay differences exist for legitimate, job-related reasons;
- ▶ Create a negotiation skills training program for women and girls;
- ▶ Recognize employers for excellence in their pay practices;
- ▶ Provide businesses, especially small ones, assistance with equal pay practices; and
- ▶ Enhance the ability of the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate and enforce pay discrimination laws.

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1 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_1YR\\_B20017&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_B20017&prodType=table)

2 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2011 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2011, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from [http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032012/perinc/pinc05\\_000.htm](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032012/perinc/pinc05_000.htm)

3 Ibid.

4 See note 1 and U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20005: Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_1YR\\_B20005&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_B20005&prodType=table)

5 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, September). *Consumer Expenditure Survey, Table 8. Region of Residence: Average Annual Expenditures, 2011*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2011/Standard/region.pdf> (Calculation uses overall average “food” cost for region.)

6 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Table R2511: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage (Dollars): United States and States*. Retrieved 21 March 2013, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_1YR\\_R2511.US01PRF&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_R2511.US01PRF&prodType=table)

7 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Table GCT2514: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars): United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_1YR\\_GCT2514.US01PR&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_GCT2514.US01PR&prodType=table) (Calculation uses median gross rent for state.)

8 AAA. (2012). *AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge Report: Current State Averages*. Retrieved 28 March 2013, from <http://fuelgauge.report.opisnet.com/sbsavg.html> (Calculation uses average cost of regular quality gasoline on 28 March 2013.)

9 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States*. Retrieved 22 March 2013, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_1YR\\_DP02&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_DP02&prodType=table) (Calculation uses households headed by females living in a household with family and no husband.)

10 U.S. Census Bureau (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved 22 March 2013, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_1YR\\_DP03&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_DP03&prodType=table) (To determine whether a household falls below the poverty level, the U.S. Census Bureau considers the income of the householder, size of the family, number of related children, and, for 1- and 2-person families, age of householder. The poverty threshold is \$18,123 for a single householder and two children under 18.)

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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](http://www.NationalPartnership.org).

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