NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

KANSAS STATE EQUAL PAY FACT SHEET

The Importance Of Fair Pay For Kansas Women

April 2012

At the time of the Equal Pay Act's passage in 1963, women working full time, year round were paid merely 59 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.[1] Enforcement of the Equal Pay Act and related civil rights laws has helped to narrow the wage gap, but significant disparities remain and must be addressed.

Women have struggled to regain jobs in the recovery and continue to face high levels of long-term unemployment,[2] even as their families rely on them more heavily for financial support.[3] Wages overall are stagnating[4] and the wage gap has barely budged over the last ten years.[5] The gap particularly harms women in these economically difficult times, when women and families are especially financially vulnerable. Although Congress has taken initial steps to improve the laws that govern pay discrimination by passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009,[6] there is more that must be done to realize the decades-old promise of fair pay for equal work.

The Gender Wage Gap Persists in Kansas

Although the gap between men's and women's wages has narrowed over the past five decades, the typical woman continues to be paid substantially less than the typical man.

- In 2010, the typical woman in Kansas working full time, year round was paid only 74 cents to every dollar paid to a man working full time, year round[7] – 3 cents wider than the nationwide wage gap of 77 cents.[8]
- The wage gap is even more substantial for African-American and Hispanic women. White, non-Hispanic women working full time, year round in Kansas were paid only 74 cents to every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year round. However, African-American women working full time, year round in Kansas were paid only 64 cents and Hispanic women only 54 cents, to every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men who worked full time, year round.[9]
- The wage gap persists at all levels of education. In 2010, women in Kansas with a high school diploma were paid only 62 cents to every dollar paid to men with a high school diploma. Comparing women and men in Kansas with a bachelor's degree the figure was 67 cents. In fact, the typical Kansas woman who has received a bachelor's degree still isn't paid as much as the typical Kansas man who has completed some college or attained an associate's degree.[10]
- The wage gap exists across occupations. For example, Kansas women working full time, year round in 2010 in management, business, and financial occupations were paid only 74 cents to every dollar paid to men in the same occupations, and Kansas women working full time, year round in sales and related occupations were paid only 60 cents to every dollar paid to men in the same occupations.[11]

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Fair Pay Is More Important to Kansas Women Than Ever in This Struggling Economy

In the current economic crisis, many people are facing financial problems, stagnant wages, and unemployment. Women in Kansas already have higher rates of economic insecurity than do men in Kansas: in 2010, women working full time, year round typically had lower earnings than men ($32,204 compared to $43,773)[12] and were more likely to live in poverty (13.8 percent of Kansas women compared to 10.0 percent of men).[13] As a result, women are particularly vulnerable to economic hardship in today's struggling economy, when every dollar counts. For example:

- High unemployment rates for men have fallen since the end of the recession, but two-and-a-half years into the recovery, women's unemployment nationwide remained above its level at the end of the recession.[14] The unemployment rate for women in Kansas in 2011 was 6.2 percent, a 2.1 percentage point increase since the recession began in December 2007,[15] and 41.7 percent of jobless women workers in Kansas had been looking for work for 27 weeks or more.[16] Women's lower earnings contribute to the fact that women frequently have fewer savings to fall back on if they lose their jobs.[17] Nationally, the average weekly unemployment insurance benefit paid to women was $259, while the average benefit for men was about $310.[18] Worse yet, women who lose their jobs are also less likely than men to receive unemployment insurance benefits at all.[19]

- The economic crisis has affected all Americans, but has been particularly hard for women – who are already in a more precarious economic position than men because of lower earnings and higher poverty rates. Women are more likely to rely on public benefits like Medicaid, food stamps (SNAP), and housing assistance,[20] services which many states have cut during the crisis.[21] About 7 percent of non-elderly adult Kansas women and 26 percent of Kansas children relied on Medicaid in 2010.[22] In December 2011, the most recent month for which data are available, Kansas provided food stamp benefits to almost 299,600 children and adults, an increase of over 4,500 from the previous year.[23] For many low-wage workers, these programs provide crucial support to meet basic needs when wages aren't enough. For example, for a full-time, year-round worker at Kansas' minimum wage, the annual pay is less than the poverty line for a family of three.[24]

- Recent tightening of state budgets has caused many states to cut back on necessary services. In Kansas, enacted cuts to education[25] disproportionately affect women and will create further hardship for Kansas women and their families.

- In 2011, women made up about two-thirds of all workers that were paid minimum wage or less, totaling almost 2.4 million women 16 and older.[26] In Kansas, the minimum wage was $7.25 per hour, equivalent to only about $14,500 a year for those working full time year round. Moreover, the minimum cash wage for tipped employees in Kansas was just $2.13 per hour, equivalent to an annual base pay of only about $4,260 for those working full time, year round.[27] Nationally, women make up almost two-thirds (64.0 percent) of workers in tipped occupations.[28] Raising the minimum wage would help close the wage gap for Kansas women.

Fair pay would help close the wage gap and increase women's economic security.

1 U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2011 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Historical Income Tables – People, Table P-40: Women's Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Earnings by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1960 to 2010, *available at* http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/people/index.html (last visited Oct. 4, 2011).

2 See NWLC's "Modest Recovery Beginning for Women" (March 9, 2012) *available at* http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/marchmodestrecoveryfactsheet.pdf.

3 Heather Boushey, Center for American Progress, "Not Working: Unemployment Among Married Couples" (May 6, 2011), *available at* http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/05/pdf/maritalunemployment.pdf.

4 Heidi Shierholz and Lawrence Mishel, Economic Policy Institute, "The sad but true story of wages in America" (March 15, 2011), *available at* http://www.epi.org/publication/the_sad_but_true_story_of_wages_in_america/.

5 Between 2001 and 2011 the wage gap closed by less than one cent. The wage gap in 2001 was 76.3 cents compared to 77.4 cents in 2011. See U.S. Census Bureau, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010 – Report and Detailed Tables [hereinafter Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage], Table A-5: Number and Real Median Earnings of Total Workers and Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex and Female to Male Earnings Ratio: 1960 to 2010 (2011) *available at* http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/income.html (last visited Sept. 28, 2011).

6 Pub. L. No. 111-2, 123 Stat. 5 (2009).
7 NWLC calculations from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey [hereinafter NWLC calculations from 2010 ACS], Table R2001: Median Earnings for Male Full-Time, Year-Round Workers and Table R2002: Median Earnings for Female Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, *available at* http://www.census.gov/acs/www/ (last visited Sept. 22, 2011).
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11 NWLC calculations from 2010 ACS, Table B24022: Sex by Occupation and Median Earnings for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Population 16 Years and Over, *available at* http://www.census.gov/acs/www (last visited Dec. 9, 2011).
12 *Supra* note 7.
13 NWLC calculations from 2010 ACS, Table C17001: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age, *available at* http://www.census.gov/acs/www/ (last visited Sept. 22, 2011).
14 *Supra* note 2.
15 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 14: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and detailed age, 2011 annual averages (2012), *available at* http://www.bls.gov/lau/ptable14full2011.pdf (last visited March 5, 2012) and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 14: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and detailed age, 2007 annual averages (2008), *available at* http://www.bls.gov/lau/table14full07.pdf (last visited Dec. 9. 2011). For individuals 16 and older.
16 Unpublished data from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (2012).
17 David C. John, Retirement Security Project, "Disparities for Women and Minorities in Retirement Saving" (Sept. 1, 2010), *available at* http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2010/0901_retirement_saving_john.aspx.
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19 Vicki Lovell, Institute for Women's Policy Research, Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, "The Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act: Improving UI Equity and Adequacy for Women" (Sept. 19, 2007).
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28 NWLC calculations from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table 11: Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2011 annual averages, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf. Includes the following occupations: waiters and waitresses; bartenders; counter attendants, cafeteria, food, and coffee shop; dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers; food servers, nonrestaurant; taxi drivers and chauffeurs; parking lot attendants; hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists; barbers; miscellaneous personal appearance workers; baggage porters, bellhops, and concierges; and gaming services workers.