

Women's Reality



Gender Inequality

phone with his wife. “Yes, I got the raise I asked for last month!” She thinks to herself, “What raise?”

While perhaps seeming exaggerated, the situations of these women are reality for many, known by most, and consequential for all.

Gender Inequality and Poverty

The Federal Poverty Guidelines measure the minimum amount of annual income needed for individuals and families to pay for essentials of life. In 2020, the poverty level for a household of four is \$26,200.

If a single woman and head of household in South Carolina works regularly in food service or wait staff jobs, the average annual pay may only be in the \$20,000 range. Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women, and 35 percent of single women with children raise their families in poverty -- many working two jobs to make ends meet.

Other indicators of women and poverty are equally grim with one in three women across the country living in poverty or close to it. Research from American Progress concludes that “more than four in 10 children who start life at the bottom distribution stay at the bottom in adulthood.” Poverty wages make childcare unaffordable, food availability insecure, housing unstable, health care untenable, and upward mobility impossible. The truth is low wages hurt women and their families and perpetuate poverty.

Gender Inequality and Healthcare

Women's healthcare costs are inequitable and with fewer numbers of health facilities nationwide this may be limiting access to quality care and well-trained staff. Even when health insurance policies are the same, women usually pay 10-60 percent more for health insurance than men unless their employer is unionized or a government organization. Equal coverage does not result in equal cost;

The Horry County Democratic Party supports women's rights to affordable healthcare and access to clinics where they can get services that are specific to women's health. In addition, we support the right to equal rights in the workplace and consideration for promotions that are not based on gender. HCDP urges the South Carolina state legislature to pass an equal pay for equal work law.

Scenarios That Mirror Real Life

RIGHT NOW: A single mom of three is up at 5 a.m. getting the kids ready for the school bus. She is grateful to the school cafeteria for once again waiving the breakfast and lunch fees. Payday is next week, and her second job was just eliminated. She's off to work and makes a note to remember to ask her friend there for her newspaper so she can take it home and look at the Help Wanted section.

RIGHT NOW: A woman pretends she is fine, but her chest has been hurting and she can't sleep well. She had let her insurance lapse because she could not afford the premium. She jokes with her sister on the phone, “Well, it was pay the premium or buy food and I was hungry.” She sighs.

RIGHT NOW: The staff supervisor is at the office early. She's been there eight years, with increasing responsibilities based on her abilities, experience, and additional night school classes and workshops over the years. Her evaluations have been stellar. In the last few years four vacant positions were filled internally by men with less seniority. Passing by her project partner Robert's desk, she hears him on the

the cost for this system is gender rated and based on insurance company claims that women live longer than men and thus need coverage for a longer lifespan.

Women in poverty who work low wage jobs with no benefits are not always able to afford private health insurance for themselves or their families; although since the introduction of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, the number of uninsured women of reproductive age has dropped 40 percent across the country. In South Carolina there was a 16 percent uninsured rate in 2018 for those between the ages of 19 and 65. Nationally the number of uninsured women was 12.8 percent in 2018 with prevalence for Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black women, low income women, immigrant women without U.S. citizenship and single mothers.

Community Health Centers and organizations such as Planned Parenthood offer a number of services, such as prenatal care and birth control, for poor and uninsured women. HCDP believes that Planned Parenthood should continue to receive federal funding to remain an option for these women. The argument that its facilities are solely abortion centers is invalid, as Planned Parenthood reported that only 4 percent of their services in 2019 were for abortion.

Gender Inequality in the Workplace

A gender pay gap exists in many workplaces with men being paid more than women for doing the same job in the private non-union sector. Across the United States women earn about 79 cents for every dollar that men make, and only 73 cents in South Carolina. Women of color earn 53 cents for every dollar earned by white men, as noted in a 2017 University of South Carolina report by the Darla Moore School of Business. South Carolina women who worked full time made, on average, about \$15,800 less than SC men. The National Women's Law Center found that though women are over-represented in low wage and under-represented in high wage occupations, women in both groups make less than men.

Although college-educated women are not the majority in the workforce, they are fast approaching it. Studies show that men with bachelor's degrees make, on average, \$26,000 more per year than women with the same degree. According to NPR's Planet Money, there are many factors fueling the

gender pay gap and the fields that employ a lot of women tend to pay less.

South Carolina is one of only four states that does not have an equal pay for equal work law.

Promotions and advancement in the workplace also show a gender gap with about 39 percent of women in 2017 saying their gender would make it harder to get a raise or a promotion at work. In 2019, for example, on average there were 60 African American women promoted to management level compared to every 100 men. While the number of women Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) in the United States' top 3000 companies has more than doubled in the last 10 years to 167, that number is still less than 6 percent of all CEO's.

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