

# African American Women and the Wage Gap

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On average, women in the United States are paid just 77 cents for every dollar paid to men.<sup>1</sup> For African American women, this disparity is much worse. Overall, African American women in the United States are paid just 70 cents for every dollar paid to men<sup>2</sup> and just 64 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.<sup>3</sup>

**Even in states with large populations of employed African American women, rampant wage disparities persist – with potentially devastating consequences for African American women and their families.**

- ▶ In the 20 states with the largest number of African American women working full time, year round, pay for African American women ranges from 55 cents to 87 cents for every dollar paid to men in those states.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ The states with the largest populations of African American women working full time, year round are Texas and New York.<sup>5</sup> In Texas, African American women are paid 78 cents for every dollar paid to men in Texas – or \$9,669 less each year.<sup>6</sup> In New York, African American women are paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to men in New York, amounting to \$10,801 less each year.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ Among these states, African American women in Louisiana and Mississippi suffer from the largest wage gap, bringing home just 55 and 61 cents, respectively, for every dollar paid to men in their states.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ Among the 20 states, California and Maryland have the smallest cents-on-the-dollar wage gaps – but African American women in those states still face substantial disparities of \$6,342 and \$11,092 less each year, respectively.<sup>9</sup>

## African American Women Cannot Afford Discrimination

**Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to African American women, whose salaries are critically important for their families.**

- ▶ More than four million family households in the United States are headed by African American women.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ Nearly 40 percent of all households headed by African American women live below the poverty level.<sup>11</sup> Of those households with a child under five years of age, the percentage increases to more than 50 percent.<sup>12</sup> This means that half of households headed by African American women with young children live in poverty.

## Wage Gap for African American Women by State

An analysis of the wage gap in the 20 states with the largest number of African American women who work full time, year round

State	Number of African American Women Working Full Time, Year Round	Median Earnings for African American Women	Median Earnings for All Men	Annual Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
Louisiana	208,699	\$25,485	\$46,313	\$20,828	55
Mississippi	145,933	\$24,572	\$40,202	\$15,630	61
South Carolina	186,184	\$26,692	\$41,464	\$14,772	64
Alabama	174,978	\$27,561	\$42,951	\$15,390	64
Virginia	264,902	\$35,171	\$52,805	\$17,634	67
New Jersey	196,348	\$41,522	\$60,568	\$19,046	69
Michigan	160,814	\$34,690	\$50,053	\$15,363	69
Ohio	185,475	\$31,739	\$46,176	\$14,437	69
Indiana	76,086	\$30,959	\$45,183	\$14,224	69
North Carolina	299,551	\$30,409	\$41,950	\$11,541	72
Georgia	456,032	\$31,731	\$43,902	\$12,171	72
Pennsylvania	183,333	\$34,401	\$47,956	\$13,555	72
Missouri	103,267	\$31,436	\$43,146	\$11,710	73
Illinois	255,014	\$37,290	\$50,746	\$13,456	73
Florida	439,995	\$29,880	\$40,951	\$11,071	73
Tennessee	156,857	\$30,611	\$41,309	\$10,698	74
Texas	486,806	\$33,491	\$43,160	\$9,669	78
New York	506,779	\$39,587	\$50,388	\$10,801	79
Maryland	335,762	\$45,616	\$56,708	\$11,092	80
California	300,453	\$42,939	\$49,281	\$6,342	87

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Geographies: All States within United States, Tables B20017B: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months (Black or African American alone) and Table B20005B: Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over (Black or African American alone).

## What Does the Wage Gap Mean for African American Women?

The median salary for African American women in the United States is \$33,501, compared to a median salary of \$48,202 for all men – or a difference of \$14,701 each year. If the wage gap were eliminated, an African American woman working full time, year round would have enough money for approximately:

- ▶ More than two years' worth of food;<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ Almost 10 months' worth of mortgage and utilities payments;<sup>14</sup>
- ▶ More than 16 months of rent;<sup>15</sup>
- ▶ More than three years' worth of family health insurance premiums;<sup>16</sup> or
- ▶ 4,549 additional gallons of gas.<sup>17</sup>

## Congress Must Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act

**The economic security of African American women and all working women and their 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 Department of Labor's and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's abilities to investigate and enforce pay discrimination laws.

1 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 27 November 2012, from [http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032011/perinc/new05\\_000.htm](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032011/perinc/new05_000.htm) (Unpublished calculation.)

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

4 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017B: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months (Black or African American alone)*. Retrieved 21 December 2012, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_3YR\\_B20017B&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_3YR_B20017B&prodType=table) (This calculation is based on a comparison of the median salary of all men working full time, year round with that of African American women working full time, year round.); U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20005B: Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over (Black or African American alone)*. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_3YR\\_B20005B&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_3YR_B20005B&prodType=table)

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 U.S. Census Bureau (2012). *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States: 2009-2011 (Black or African American alone)*. Retrieved 18 December 2012, from [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_3YR\\_S0201&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_3YR_S0201&prodType=table)

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, September). *Consumer Expenditure Survey, Table 8. Region of Residence: Average Annual Expenditures, 2011*. Retrieved 17 October 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2011/Standard/region.pdf> (Unpublished calculation.)

14 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates, Table R2511: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage (Dollars): United States and States*. Retrieved 17 October 2012, 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) (Unpublished calculation.)

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15 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates, Table GCT 2514: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars): United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 4 April 2012,

[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.)

16 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (2012). *State Health Facts: Average Family Premium per Enrolled Employee for Employer-Based Health Insurance, 2011*. Retrieved 19 December 2012, from <http://statehealthfacts.org/comparetable.jsp?typ=4&ind=271&cat=5&sub=67> (Calculation uses 2011 average family premium data for employee contribution.)

17 AAA. (2012). *AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge Report: Current State Averages*. Retrieved 21 December 2012, from <http://fuelgauge.report.opisnet.com/index.asp> (Calculation uses average cost of regular quality gasoline as of December 11, 2012).

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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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