



**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Page Gardner, The Voter Participation Center  
Lake Research Partners

**Re:** The Gender and Marriage Gap in Earnings<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** April 9, 2013

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April 9 marks Equal Pay Day or how far into 2013 a woman must work in order to earn the same as a man did in just 2012. In real terms, a working woman must work nearly 16 months to earn what a man makes in just one 12 month period. While this is a startling fact, even more dumbfounding is how many months an unmarried woman must work to earn as much as a married man. An unmarried woman has to work more than 19 months to earn what a married man earns in just one year.<sup>2</sup> In 2012, unmarried women made just 63 cents compared to every dollar a married man earned.<sup>3</sup>

With last week's jobs report that the number of jobs added at just eighty eight thousand, this is a statistic that has real world significance. What workers earn, and specifically what unmarried women earn, can pose real obstacles or create real opportunities to improve their lives. There are over 55 million unmarried women in America, up from approximately 53 million women in 2010.<sup>4</sup> As 11% of women are unmarried and living in poverty and 9% are unmarried and do not have health insurance. With more than four in ten births now to single mothers, the pay gap between unmarried women and the other Americans will have significant implications for their children's wellbeing, too.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These disparities have a variety of causes that we cannot control for with these data including education, industry, and comparable work.

<sup>2</sup> The category of unmarried women includes never married, widowed, divorced, and separated women.

<sup>3</sup> Current Population Survey March 2012 <http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps ftp.html>

<sup>4</sup> Current Population Survey September 2012 – February 2013

<sup>5</sup> U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics Reports (NVSR) *Births: Preliminary Data for 2010*

Almost four and a half years after President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, women still lag behind their male counterparts. While women and women's health and access to rights were hotly discussed in the run up to November's election, the issue is not one that has seen significant improvement. Last week, in his bid for John Kerry's Senate seat, Representative Ed Markey released an ad touting his work on equal pay for equal work, which could be a sign that this pocket book issue is growing in importance and is central in voters' minds.

### ***Personal Earnings***

According to recent wage data from the Census Bureau, women's earnings were 76% of men's: women's median annual earnings in 2012 were \$38,100 compared to men's \$50,000. Women of color struggle even more with these disparities.

**Personal Earnings Among Full-Time Workers, 2012<sup>6</sup>**

	Men	Women	White Women	African American Women	Latinas
Median Annual Income	\$50,000	\$38,100	\$40,327	\$35,000	\$30,000
Comparative Personal Earnings	1.00	76¢	81¢	70¢	60¢

### ***Marital Status***

The gap is only exacerbated when marital status is considered. Looking at marital status breakdowns, unmarried women make far less than both married and unmarried men, and also lag behind their married counterparts. In 2012, unmarried women earned \$35,440, compared to unmarried men who earned \$38,000. Unmarried women earned almost \$5,000 less than married women (\$40,010) and a whopping \$20,800 or 59% of their own annual income less than married men (\$56,253). Overall, unmarried women earn only 63 cents for every dollar a married man makes.

**Personal Earnings Among Full-Time Workers by Marital Status, 2012<sup>7</sup>**

	Women		Men	
	Unmarried	Married	Unmarried	Married
Median Annual Income	\$35,440	\$40,010	\$38,000	\$56,253
Comparative Personal Earnings	63¢	71¢	68¢	\$1.00

<sup>6</sup> Ibid <http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps ftp.html>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid <http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps ftp.html>

## Single Moms Earn Less

These wage gaps have real impacts upon children being raised by single moms. In 2012, single moms earned more than \$24,000 less than married men; just 57 cents to every dollar.

Unmarried women with younger children are hit even more severely, earning almost \$30,000 or 110% of their own annual income less than a married man. There is also a nearly \$10,000 gap between unmarried and married moms.

### Personal Earnings By Parental Status, 2011<sup>8</sup>

	Married Men	Unmarried Women				Married Women			
		Total	Not a Parent	With Own Children Under 18	With Own Children Under 6	Total	Not a Parent	With Own Children Under 18	With Own Children Under 6
Annual Average	\$56,253	\$35,440	\$37,150	\$32,000	\$27,168	\$40,010	\$40,002	\$40,016	\$41,500
Comparative Personal Earnings	\$1.00	63¢	66¢	57¢	48¢	71¢	71¢	71¢	74¢

## Disparities With Real Consequences

This data demonstrates how unmarried women, in particular, are affected by unequal pay and how one's race or parental status impact an unmarried woman's earning potential. However, the disparities go deeper than salary impacting how unmarried women are able to provide for themselves and their families. The economic recession of the last few years disproportionately affected women – from February 2011 through to February 2012, 2.1 million jobs were added to the payroll. Only 31% of these jobs were filled by women, 69% by men.<sup>9</sup> This disproportionality has very real effects on women's lives, and specifically for unmarried women:

- In the year to October 2011, 66% of single mothers reported having trouble paying a bill on time. Only 40% of married mothers reported such an issue.<sup>10</sup>
- In the same year, 44% of unmarried mothers had difficulty paying their rent or mortgage. About a third of married mothers report the same challenge (31% of married mothers).<sup>11</sup>
- 16% of unmarried mothers, compared to 9% of married mothers, reported going hungry in the same year because they could not afford food.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid [http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps\\_ftp.html](http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps_ftp.html)

<sup>9</sup> Heather Boushey, Slow and Steady Job Growth, americanprogress.org

<sup>10</sup> IWPR/Rockefeller Report, Women And Men Living On The Edge, October, 2011

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

- 17% of unmarried women do not have health insurance; only 8.8% of married women are not covered.<sup>13</sup>

Unmarried women face constant challenges; their disproportionately small paychecks give rise to other issues that impact their everyday lives. With the economy continuing to be at the forefront of voters' minds, those concerned with helping the most economically-distressed Americans would be well advised to listen to unmarried women and understand how correcting this disparity can have real impacts in all areas of their lives. In a recent poll, 52% of unmarried women named ending the pay gap to be one of their top two policy priorities.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> American Community Survey, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> A national survey of 1480 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) August 6-10, 2011 conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps and Women's Voices, Women Vote. Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/- 2.5 percentage points at 95 percent confidence.