

Roy Schwartz

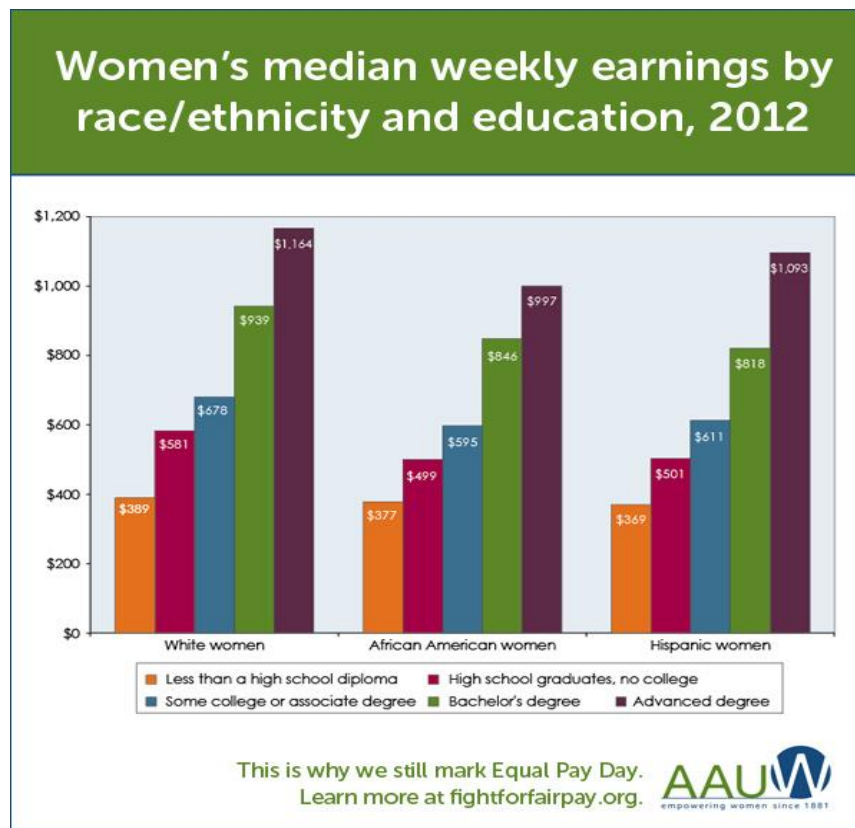
Race and Ethnicity in American Politics

Professor Raymond Smith

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Workplace Discrimination of the African American Woman

Key Words: Discrimination, Sexism, "Equally Qualified," African American, Women, Education

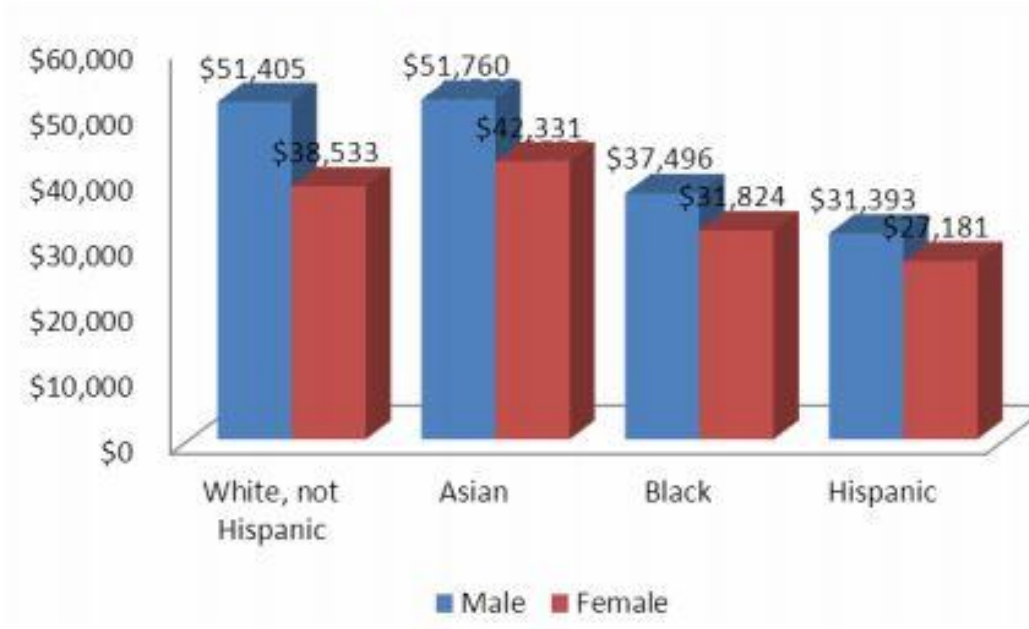


Source: American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Description: The combination of racism and sexism has severely limited the progress of the African American woman, to this day black women are still discriminated against due to their color and gender. The discrimination is especially prevalent in the workplace, where black

women earn significantly less, and receive fewer opportunities than similarly qualified candidates.

Figure 2. Annual Median Income Levels by Race and Gender, 2009³



Source- United States Census Bureau

Key Points:

- There is a significant wage gap between African American women and equally qualified candidates
- African American women have seen their education levels rise dramatically in the last 40 years, while their wages have not increased proportionally to the rise in education.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received 33,512 complaints of racial discrimination in 2012
- The (EEOC) received 30,356 complaints of gender discrimination in 2012

Issue Brief:

The struggle for equality has been a long and arduous task for the African American woman. She can experience discrimination due to her race, and her gender. The black woman has been consistently discriminated against in the United States for years; this discrimination endures to this day. The black woman was forced to fight two separate but equally difficult battles in order to see herself attain the same civil rights as her peers. Although the passage of the 19th Amendment and the Civil Rights Act displayed enormous progress, there is still much to be done for African American women to receive the equal treatment that the Constitution claims it provides them.

In 2010 women earned only 77% of what men earned, the median earnings for women were \$36,931 compared to \$47,715 for men. (2010 Census) Women are still being paid less than their male counterparts. Although the discrimination can vary somewhat geographically across the United States, it is clear that workplace discrimination of women is a national issue. (AAUW, Discrimination Chart) Unfortunately, the wage gap between women and men is not the only discrimination faced in the workplace for black women. The 2010 Census also showed that African American's earned only 58.7% of what white workers earned. (2010 Census) The Census shows a clear and noteworthy wage gap between the African American woman and her male/white counterparts. The findings present the question, are the wage gaps a result of an education and qualification gap, or are they a result of illegal workplace discrimination?

Authors Michael Struyk and Raymond J. Fix attempt to answer this question in their book *Clear and Convincing Evidence: Measurement of Discrimination in America*. The book is the results of testing by the authors of the levels of discrimination in employment, housing and

mortgage lending. The auditing showed that equally qualified whites were more likely to receive employment than equally qualified blacks, as well that equally qualified men were more likely to receive employment than equally qualified women. (Struyk and Fix, 1993)

African American Women have seen their education level rise dramatically in the last forty years. Currently, African American woman significantly outpace African American men in education progress. An African American man is half as likely to get a college degree as an African American woman. (Kirp, 2010) Black women are outperforming black men in educational status, but still lag behind in wage equality. Simply put, African American women are becoming more educated while still being paid less. The increase in education level of African American women has not resulted in a similar increase in wages. (Browne, 1999) As Irene Browne describes, African American women have not seen a proportional rise in income that would coincide with their rise in education. Black women are still clearly battling discrimination in the workplace, however the amount and intensity of the discrimination appears to be on the decline.


Despite some of the lingering issues, African American women have made great progress in overcoming discrimination in the workplace. The median annual earnings of a black woman in 1969 was 17,101 this number has risen to 21,000 in 1996 one of the largest jumps that any group experienced. (US department of Commerce, 1998) Significant progress is being made in the fight for workplace equality, the combined effects of the continuing rise in education level and the provisions of Title IX will continue to fuel the equality movement. The Lily Ledbetter Act of 2009 represented another important step in the fight for equality. The bill reforms the process for women file a discriminatory complaint. However, more importantly it brought national attention to an issue that many do not wish to discuss. President Obama's willingness to take a public

stance against workplace discrimination of women is a strong sign for the success of current and future reform movements. There is still work to be done, but African American women have come a long way in the battle against workplace discrimination and are continuing to see the wage gap decrease.

Median Annual Earnings and Earnings Ratio for Full-time, Year-round Workers, Ages 16 and Older, by State and Gender, 2012														
	Men	Women	Earnings Ratio		Men	Women	Earnings Ratio		Men	Women	Earnings Ratio			
1	Washington, D.C.	\$66,754	\$60,116	90%	19	Massachusetts	\$60,243	\$47,651	79%	37	Kansas	\$44,765	\$34,131	76%
2	Maryland	\$57,447	\$49,000	85%	20	Oregon	\$47,402	\$37,381	79%	38	Oklahoma	\$41,415	\$31,543	76%
3	Nevada	\$42,137	\$35,941	85%	21	Virginia	\$52,125	\$41,104	79%	39	Kentucky	\$42,321	\$32,157	76%
4	Vermont	\$44,776	\$38,017	85%	22	New Jersey	\$60,878	\$47,878	79%	40	Pennsylvania	\$49,330	\$37,414	76%
5	New York	\$51,274	\$43,000	84%	23	Illinois	\$51,262	\$40,309	79%	41	Mississippi	\$40,081	\$30,287	76%
6	California	\$50,139	\$41,956	84%	24	Connecticut	\$61,097	\$47,900	78%	42	Idaho	\$41,664	\$31,296	75%
7	Florida	\$40,889	\$34,202	84%	25	Washington	\$52,529	\$41,062	78%	43	Alaska	\$57,068	\$42,345	74%
8	Hawaii	\$45,748	\$38,040	83%	26	South Dakota	\$40,721	\$31,792	78%	44	North Dakota	\$45,888	\$33,877	74%
9	Maine	\$42,280	\$35,057	83%	27	Wisconsin	\$46,898	\$36,535	78%	45	Michigan	\$49,897	\$36,772	74%
10	Arizona	\$43,618	\$35,974	82%	28	South Carolina	\$41,740	\$32,402	78%	46	Indiana	\$45,620	\$33,419	73%
11	North Carolina	\$41,859	\$34,421	82%	29	Iowa	\$45,305	\$35,106	77%	47	Alabama	\$44,567	\$31,674	71%
12	Georgia	\$43,707	\$35,479	81%	30	Nebraska	\$42,878	\$33,218	77%	48	Utah	\$48,540	\$34,062	70%
13	Delaware	\$50,689	\$41,120	81%	31	Tennessee	\$41,828	\$32,398	77%	49	West Virginia	\$44,159	\$30,885	70%
14	Rhode Island	\$50,975	\$41,074	81%	32	New Hampshire	\$54,136	\$41,774	77%	50	Louisiana	\$47,249	\$31,586	67%
15	New Mexico	\$41,211	\$33,074	80%	33	Ohio	\$46,789	\$35,984	77%	51	Wyoming	\$51,932	\$33,152	64%
16	Colorado	\$50,509	\$40,402	80%	34	Arkansas	\$40,153	\$30,843	77%		United States*	\$49,398	\$37,791	77%
17	Minnesota	\$50,885	\$40,595	80%	35	Missouri	\$42,974	\$32,868	76%					
18	Texas	\$44,802	\$35,453	79%	36	Montana	\$41,656	\$31,775	76%					

*National data include workers ages 15 and older and are based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.

Sources: State data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, National data: DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, (2013). U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-245, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010, U.S. Government Printing Office.



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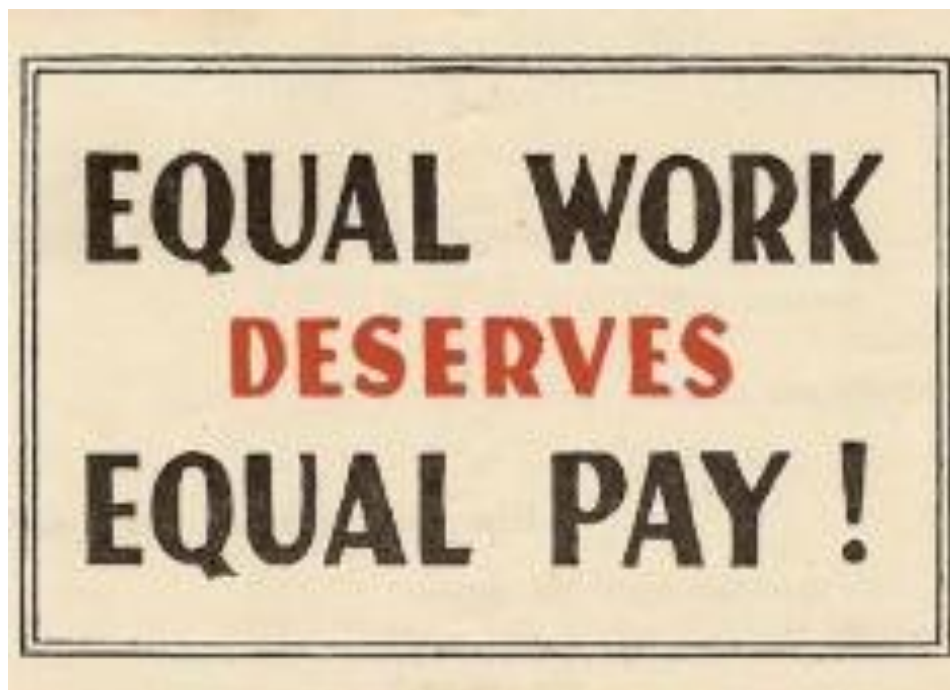
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- American Association of University Women-<http://www.aauw.org/>



Source- On the Issues Magazine