

Envision | Issue Statement Paper

Group Name

Making \$ense (Gore Group 11)

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Issue and Topic

Women in the Workplace

Background on the Issue

Despite rapid progressive change to combat gender inequality, a wage gap between the mean earnings of men and women remains prevalent in the 21st century. This gap differs from country to country, yet on average, women in the United States typically earn 82.9c to each dollar a man earns. This issue is worst among women of color; with Latino women at 54% of a dollar, African American at 63%, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander at 60%, American Indian and Alaskan Native at 58%, Asian at 85% and White (non-Hispanic) at 75%. As well as these differences between women of various ethnicities, the wage gap between men and women widen with age. Young graduates entering the workforce experience a wage gap of 90c to a dollar; however, as both sexes reach 35 years, this gap widens to 75%.

Problem Statement

As evident, women are faced with the conflict between personal fulfillment and their own career aspirations, directly affecting their earnings.

Description of the Problem

Due to unaffordable childcare, women (who are typically viewed as the primary child carriers and homemakers) are inevitably forced to take part-time and casual work, thus resulting in lower salaries. On the other hand, men are able to continue full-time work, ultimately bringing home a higher salary at the expense of the women's ability to pursue their career endeavors. This problem is exacerbated with single mothers and women of color, as their typically lower-socioeconomic status forces them into a cycle of relative poverty.

Whilst the wage gap exists between middle and lower classes, this same problem is evident among high paying positions. In the corporate world, female CEOs interestingly earn more than their male counterparts, due to the rarity of women in higher paying positions. This itself highlights how women are at a disadvantage in the working world, unfairly being paid less than males, as well as also being forced into circumstances that cause this and also struggling to fill higher paying positions. As we enter a progressive era, remaining gender inequality including the wage gap, must be addressed. In practical terms, as the economy weakens and inflation and interest rates begin to rise due to increasing amount of tariffs in other countries, a higher working population will be required to maintain the economy and by encouraging women with equal pay and opportunities in the workplace, we ultimately do.

Conclusively, women simply earn on average 82.9c to a dollar of a man's earnings, despite having the same potential as men to earn the same. It is our moral obligation as human beings to ensure equality exists between genders, races, and religions.

Sustainable Solution

Description of Solution

- Making \$ense will support the paycheck Fairness Act to not only encourage women to speak openly about their wages, but to also prevent employers from retaliating against their employees for sharing wage information ("Senate GOP blocks paycheck bill").
- Create a Commissioner for Equal Pay, where regular checks are conducted in workplaces to ensure employers are paying their employees fairly. Any workplaces not abiding by these regulations will be forced to do so within 6 months.
- Lead a national call to action for corporations, organizations and individuals. This will be done through an annual march supporting the rights of women in the workplace during Equal Pay Day at a different major city each year.
- Volunteer Day Care Centers specifically aimed to support women of low socioeconomic status.

Key Partners and Resources Needed

- The Government.
- Key female and male figures including Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama, Angela Merkel, Duchess Kate, Miss America, Natalie Portman (wage gap in Hollywood), Justin Trudeau, Malala.
- Volunteers for the child care centers.

Potential Challenges and Workaround

- Challenge: Negative public opinion.

Solution: Encourage open-mindedness, provide persuasive argument.

- Challenge: "Equal pay bills" being passed in Congress.

Solution: Lobbying.

Timeline

Next 6 months:

- Raise awareness of the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Next year:

- Establish at least two volunteer childcare centers.
- Hold the first annual women march in Washington DC.

Next two years:

- Establish Commissioner for Equal Pay

Research Sources

"10 Things That Need To Be Done To Close The Wage Gap". The Huffington Post. N.p., 2017. Web. 20 Jan. 2017.

"The Gender Wage Gap Is A Chasm For Women Of Color, In One Chart". ThinkProgress. N.p., 2017. Web. 20 Jan. 2017.