



## WHAT IS FEMINISM?

Advocacy for **women's rights** and **equality** between men and women. **Both men and women can be feminists**, and not all women are feminists.

Feminism has meant different things to people in different generations. Individual feminists have had differing goals and strategies based on the time and place they lived.

## WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL?

- In 2015, there were 21 female heads of state in the world.
- Over 150 countries have at least one sexist law.
- One in three women in the world have experienced sexual or physical violence.
- In most countries, women earn 60-75% of what men earn.
- 63 million girls are not in school.

[Explore Gender Equality in your Country](#)

## FEMINISM HISTORY IN THE U.S.

### First Wave (1880's-1950's)

Feminism grew out of the anti-slavery movement in the mid 1800's. These feminists largely fought for women's right to vote, which was achieved in 1920.

### Second Wave (1960's-1970's)

These feminists fought for equality in education, the workplace, divorce law, reproductive rights and the Equal Rights Amendment. They also embraced more open attitudes toward sexuality.

### Third Wave (1980's-2000's)

Feminism expanded to include many more people who recognized the differing experiences of people of different economic and racial backgrounds.

### Fourth Wave (2008-Present)

These feminists have embraced online advocacy and, in addition to working on equal rights, they work to liberate people from traditional stereotypes of masculinity and femininity.

## THINGS TO DISCUSS

- **Is feminism still relevant? If so, how? If not, why?**
- **Are men and women equal in your society? If not, in what ways are they not equal?**
- **Do you think life would be better for all if there were gender equality? If so, what do you think is the best way to achieve gender equality?**





### DEBATE

(Approximately 75 minutes)

**Suggested debate resolution: Governments should make it illegal for men to earn more than women for doing the same work.**

### MATERIALS TO PREPARE AND RULES

1. Prepare pads of paper and pens/pencils.
2. Print out multiple copies of the attached **Debate Resources** articles.
3. Teams may not interrupt the opposing team to provide relevant information.

### INTRODUCTION (5-10 minutes)

1. Pass out the fact and discussion sheet.
2. Create two teams of debaters (can have multiple people per team; **ideal size is 2-4 people per team**). Make sure to assign time keepers (and judges if appropriate) — they can be participants or staff members.
3. Pass out the **Debate Resources**.

### STUDY AND PLANNING (20 minutes)

1. The groups should have some time to read, do research (if available, team members can also use computers), and plan their debate strategy (including who will speak).
2. They will plan their arguments and prepare counter-arguments based on what they think the other side will say.

### DEBATE (27 minutes)

1. **Affirmative/Pro** team presents case: 4 minutes
2. **Negative/Con** team conducts Cross-Examination of the Affirmative Team: 3 minutes
3. **Negative** team presents case: 4 minutes
4. **Affirmative** team conducts Cross-Examination of the Negative Team: 3 minutes
5. Teams prepare rebuttal responses and closing arguments: 5 minutes
6. **Affirmative** team presents rebuttal response and closing arguments: 4 minutes
7. **Negative** team presents rebuttal response and closing arguments: 4 minutes

### DISCUSSION (10+ minutes)

1. Host facilitates discussion with debaters and audience regarding issues.
2. **Optional:** Judges (made up of participants and/or American Space staff) discuss and announce the winner of the debate.

## **The Wage Gap Is the Result of Discrimination**

Are Women Paid Fairly, 2013

From Opposing Viewpoints in Context

Mashaun D. Simon is a writer for *Black Enterprise*.

The following viewpoint discusses a bill to end gender pay discrimination that was still pending Senate approval in 2008. At the time of this article's publication, statistics claimed that on average, women earned only 77 percent of the amount men earned. The Payness Fairness Act would put gender-based wage discrimination on equal footing with other discriminations by allowing women to sue for punitive damages.

Women across America are claiming a small victory thanks to the passage of a bill designed to end gender-based pay discrimination. H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act, still pending Senate approval, could make it easier for women to sue employers for wage bias.

The Paycheck Fairness Act takes immediate steps to close the wage gap for women by amending and strengthening the Equal Pay Act of 1963, according to Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), a cosponsor of the bill who spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives. "Although the wage gap between men and women has narrowed since the passage of the EPA, gender-based wage discrimination remains a problem for women in the U.S. workforce," Lee said in a statement.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women still earn on average only 77% of what men earn. The situation is far worse for women of color. For every dollar men earned in 2006, African American women were paid just 64 cents; Hispanic women earned 52 cents.

"The wage disparity between men and women costs women anywhere from \$400,000 to \$2 million over a lifetime—keenly impacting the economic security of single women who are heads of households and those women in retirement," adds Lee.

Based on AAUW research, just one year after college graduation, women earn only 80% of what their male counterparts earn.

Not even a college degree is much help, says Lisa M. Maatz, director of Public Policy and Government Relations at the American Association of University Women. Based on AAUW research, just one year after college graduation, women earn only 80% of what their male counterparts earn. As they move further up in their careers, women fall further behind, earning about 69% of what men earn 10 years after having graduated college.

Maatz says the Paycheck Fairness Act takes some basic yet meaningful steps. While it strengthens some of the loopholes of the EPA, it also puts some enforcement efforts into place. Most importantly, she says, it prohibits retaliation by employers against employees who speak out or even discuss

## Debate Resource 1 - page 2

It might have taken more than a decade, says Maatz, but a message has been sent by the House: "Gender-based pay discrimination will not be tolerated." Maatz hopes that, as law, the Paycheck Fairness Act will deter employers from unequal pay practices and encourage them to self-police.

But not all women see the necessity in H.R. 1338. "I am really scratching my head over why the Paycheck Fairness Act is a priority," says Deborah Stallings, president and CEO of HR ANEW, a minority- and woman-owned agency specializing in human resources management, compensation and benefits design and administration, employment law, management, recruitment, and hiring. "This problem [of gender-based pay discrimination] has improved greatly since the passage of the EPA."

As an HR consultant, Stallings says she's opposed to HR 1338 as it is currently written. However, "paying women and all people fairly is a marketplace issue, and I'm not opposed to an agenda that ensures that all people are paid fairly and equally based upon knowledge, skills, abilities, education, and other demographics such as geographical location, industry, etc."

Maatz says she urges the Senate to pass HR 1338. "Equal pay for equal work is a serious issue, and women are paying more attention in this election season."

### Source Citation

Simon, Mashaun D. "The Wage Gap Is the Result of Discrimination." *Are Women Paid Fairly?*, edited by Jennifer Dorman, Greenhaven Press, 2013. At Issue. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010851206/OVIC?u=dclib\_main&xid=b12496c0. Accessed 11 Aug. 2017. Originally published as "Equal Work, Equal Pay: Congress Seeks to Make Gender Pay Discrimination a Thing of the Past," *Black Enterprise*, 1 Nov. 2008.

## **The Wage Gap Is a Result of Women's Choices**

*Are Women Paid Fairly?*, 2013

From *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*

Christina Hoff Sommers is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

The latest proposal of a paycheck fairness bill is misguided, as it aligns with those who believe that a male-female wage gap exists as a result of discrimination against women. Any wage gap can be explained by many other factors, particularly individual choices. The bill would be unfair to employers and create an inaccurately bleak picture of women in the workplace.

Among the top items left on the Senate's to-do list before the November [2010] elections is a "paycheck fairness" bill [this bill, which would make it easier for women to file class-action, punitive-damages suits against employers they accuse of sex-based pay discrimination [The Paycheck Fairness Act did not pass].

The bill's passage is hardly certain, but it has received strong support from women's rights groups, professional organizations and even President Obama, who has called it "a common-sense bill."

But the bill isn't as commonsensical as it might seem. It overlooks mountains of research showing that discrimination plays little role in pay disparities between men and women, and it threatens to impose onerous requirements on employers to correct gaps over which they have little control.

The bill is based on the premise that the 1963 Equal Pay Act, which bans sex discrimination in the workplace, has failed; for proof, proponents point out that for every dollar men earn, women earn just 77 cents.

But that wage gap isn't necessarily the result of discrimination. On the contrary, there are lots of other reasons men might earn more than women, including differences in education, experience and job tenure.

When these factors are taken into account the gap narrows considerably—in some studies, to the point of vanishing. A recent survey found that young, childless, single urban women earn 8 percent more than their male counterparts, mostly because more of them earn college degrees.

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### **How Choices Affect Wages**

Moreover, a 2009 analysis of wage-gap studies commissioned by the Labor Department evaluated more than 50 peer-reviewed papers and concluded that the aggregate wage gap "may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers."

## Debate Resource 2 - page 2

In addition to differences in education and training, the review found that women are more likely than men to leave the workforce to take care of children or older parents. They also tend to value family-friendly workplace policies more than men, and will often accept lower salaries in exchange for more benefits. In fact, there were so many differences in pay-related choices that the researchers were unable to specify a residual effect due to discrimination.

Some of the bill's supporters admit that the pay gap is largely explained by women's choices, but they argue that those choices are skewed by sexist stereotypes and social pressures. Those are interesting and important points, worthy of continued public debate.

[Women] also tend to value family-friendly workplace policies more than men, and will often accept lower salaries in exchange for more benefits.

The problem is that while the debate proceeds, the bill assumes the answer: it would hold employers liable for the "lingering effects of past discrimination"—"pay disparities" that have been "spread and perpetuated through commerce." Under the bill, it's not enough for an employer to guard against intentional discrimination; it also has to police potentially discriminatory assumptions behind market-driven wage disparities that have nothing to do with sexism.

Universities, for example, typically pay professors in their business schools more than they pay those in the school of social work, citing market forces as the justification. But according to the gender theory that informs this bill, sexist attitudes led society to place a higher value on male-centered fields like business than on female-centered fields like social work.

### The Paycheck Fairness Act is Unfair to Employees

The bill's language regarding these "lingering effects" is vague, but that's the problem: it could prove a legal nightmare for even the best-intentioned employers. The theory will be elaborated in feminist expert testimony when cases go to trial, and it's not hard to imagine a media firestorm developing from it. Faced with multimillion-dollar lawsuits and the attendant publicity, many innocent employers would choose to settle.

The Paycheck Fairness bill would set women against men, empower trial lawyers and activists, perpetuate falsehoods about the status of women in the workplace and create havoc in a precarious job market. It is 1970s-style gender-war feminism for a society that should be celebrating its success in substantially, if not yet completely, overcoming sex-based workplace discrimination.

### Source Citation

Sommers, Christina Hoff. "The Wage Gap Is a Result of Women's Choices." *Are Women Paid Fairly?*, edited by Jennifer Dorman, Greenhaven Press, 2013. At Issue. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010851207/OVIC?u=dclib\_main&xid=a234940d. Accessed 11 Aug. 2017. Originally published as "Fair Pay Isn't Always Equal Pay," *www.NYTimes.com*, 21 Sept. 2010.