

## The Gender Pay Gap Hidden in Plain Sight

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On average, women earn 82 cents for every dollar men make. When we account for various different factors including education, location, industry, and experience, the gap would shrink to a 2% difference. 90% of nurses are women. Yet, they get paid an average of 10% less than male nurses. The wage gap is more significant for most women of color.

The real question is, why is the gender wage gap still here today? These differences in pay are caused by the fact that there are more men in higher-paid industries and more women in lower-paid industries. There are also fewer women in senior leveled positions which results in more high-paying positions for men. In the 50s and 60s, some causes for the pay gap included lower education rates among females, women not being in the workforce, and grouping in common feminine industries. Back then, it was completely legal to pay women less money.

I believe that an ideal society would be a place where everyone is paid based on their abilities; regardless of their gender. In countries like Iceland and Rwanda, the gender pay gap is very small compared to many other countries around the world. In 1981, Iceland passed a law that required new mothers to have a paid 3 month maternity leave. In 1988, the leave was extended to 6 months. This sounded like a wonderful idea until this encouraged women to stay at home while men continued to work. In the year 2000, a law was passed that gave a parental leave to dads which was optional for men to take. They made this law optional so that dads would feel pressured to take this benefit. If many countries were to incorporate a paid maternity and paternity leave, it would leave a positive difference in our society.

The U.S. offers an unpaid paternity leave; which is an issue for many men since they won't get a paycheck. Only a few states and cities in the U.S. have paternity leave laws. There

also isn't a federal paid maternity leave in the U.S which forces many moms of newborns and newly adopted children to quit their job. However, women who don't have children earn 96% of every dollar. From this, we could see that being a mother also contributes to the gender pay gap.

Incorporating a paid maternity and paternity leave would benefit the community because it supports the fact that women aren't only primary caretakers and men aren't only breadwinners. Research shows that 43% of highly qualified women with children quit their job or take a leave. It will take 108 years for equal representation in male and female executives in the boardroom according to the World Economic Forum. Changes in pay are needed for an ideal society to be formed. After all, as Sheryl Sandberg once said, "It's indisputable that there's a real pay gap. People can argue about how big, but that's almost besides the point. The point is that every woman, every girl, deserves to get paid what they're worth."

### Works Cited:

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