

– Report Highlights –

**Invest in Women, Invest in America:
A Comprehensive Review of Women in the U.S. Economy**

Women’s Workforce Participation has Increased

- For the first time in the nation’s history, women comprise half of the U.S. workforce (49.8 percent), up from 35.6 percent in 1970.
- In 2008, 64.3 percent of mothers with a child under age 6 worked outside the home, an increase from 39.6 percent in 1975.

Families Depend on Women’s Earnings

- In the typical married household, where both spouses work, the wife’s paycheck accounts for over one third (36.0 percent) of the family’s income, an increase from 26.6 percent in 1970.
- Among all working wives in 2008, 38.1 percent earned as much or more as their husbands, compared to 18.7 percent in 1967.
- Between 1983 and 2008, married couples with a working wife experienced average annual income growth of 1.1 percent, while married couples where the wife did not work saw their average annual incomes decline by 0.2 percent per year.
- In 2009, women were the sole breadwinners in one in three (34 percent) families with children.

A Gender Pay Gap Persists

- A full-time, year-round female worker earns only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. This number hasn’t really moved since 2001.
- Women aged 50 and over earn just 75 percent of what their male counterparts earn.
- A recent GAO report, which looked at the pay gap among women and men employed in management positions, found that full-time female managers earn 81 cents for every dollar earned by their male manager peers.
- Mothers face an additional wage penalty. Mothers incur a 2.5 percent earnings penalty per child, while fathers see a 2.1 percent earnings boost for each child.
- Over the course of a career, the pay gap has an enormous cumulative impact. The average woman loses \$430,000 to the pay gap by the time she retires.

Women are Key Economic Decision-Makers

- Women control 73 percent of household spending.

Women are Underrepresented in Corporate Leadership Positions

- While women comprise 46.4 percent of all employees in Fortune 500 companies, they make up just 15.7 percent of board seats, 14.4 percent of executive officers, 7.6 percent of top earning executive officers, and 2.4 percent of CEOs.

Women in Corporate Leadership Positions Lead to Stronger Companies

- Companies with the most women on their boards of directors outperform those with the fewest women on their boards on several key performance measures – return on invested capital is 65 percent higher in firms with strong female representation; return on equity is 53 percent higher; and return on sales is 42 percent higher.
- The 25 Fortune 500 firms with the best records of promoting women to senior positions record returns on assets 18 percent higher and returns on investments 69 percent higher than the Fortune 500 median for their industry.

Female Business Owners a Key Source of Growth

- Between 1997 and 2007, the number of women-owned businesses grew by 44 percent, twice as fast as the number of male-owned businesses.
- These women-owned businesses added approximately 500,000 jobs between 1997 and 2007, a time when the rest of privately-held firms lost jobs.

Women are Working in Growth Sectors

- Women make up three out of four workers in education and health services (77.3 percent), the fastest-growing sector of the U.S. economy.
- Female workers currently comprise the majority share of all but three of the fifteen occupations with the largest projected employment growth between 2006 and 2016.

Women's Educational Attainment Surpasses Men

- Today, women receive almost 60 percent of the bachelor's degrees granted in the United States, compared to 40 percent in 1970.

Out-of-Date Framework for Social Support Makes Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities More Difficult

The nation's policies have not kept pace with women's increasing participation in the workforce. Most families require two breadwinners, and as a result, women and their spouses do not have the support to help them meet and balance their work responsibilities along with their continued care-giving responsibilities.

- Beginning in January 2011, the United States will be the only OECD nation with no **paid parental leave**.
- The absence of a **national paid sick leave policy** leaves millions of women with no recourse when they're ill and have to stay home or when their child is sick and requires care. 37 percent of women working in firms with 15 or more workers do not have access to paid sick leave.
- Workers who are sick, but show up for work anyway because they have no paid sick leave, end up harming the economy through reduced productivity on the job – or “presenteeism.”
- While **flexible work arrangements** help to boost employee loyalty and productivity, only half of American workers agree they have the flexibility they need in order to successfully manage their work and family life.

Under-Investment in Early Care and Education Places Strains on Women

- The early care and education system in the United States remains under-developed and under-funded, and access to quality, affordable care for young children represents a major source of financial and emotional stress for working parents.
- The cost of full-time, center-based child care for an infant is nearly half (49 percent) of the annual income of a two-parent family living at the federal poverty threshold (\$18,310/year in 2009).
- Spending on children as a share of domestic spending has been declining for decades: in 1960, it comprised 20.2 percent of all domestic spending, by 2000 it had dropped to 16.2 percent, and by 2018, spending on children as a share of domestic spending is projected to drop to 13.8 percent.