

THE SIMPLE TRUTH

ABOUT THE GENDER WAGE GAP IN THE STATES

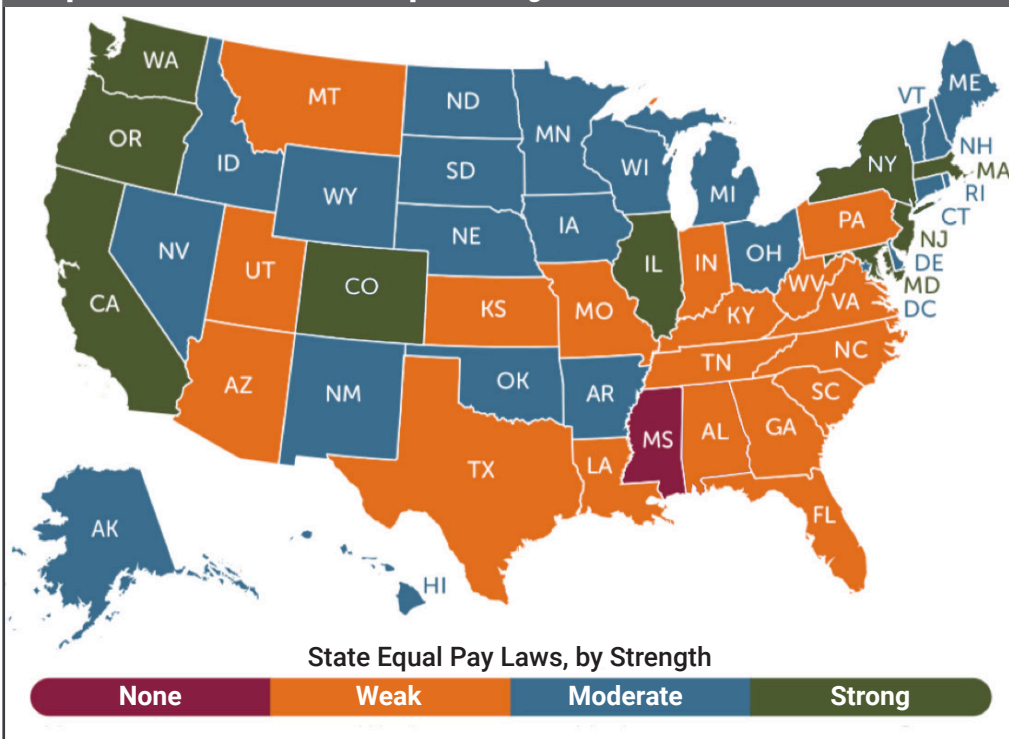


Much of the progress toward closing the gender pay gap is happening on a state level. Currently, every state, with the exception of **Mississippi**, has at least some basic equal pay protections.

State laws regarding pay equity vary considerably. Some cover all employees, others affect employees working for only public or only private employers and still others regulate only employers who have more than a certain number of workers.

Roughly one-third of states also have major loopholes in those protections that allow employers to continue to pay women less than men. For example, **Louisiana's** equal pay protections apply only to public employers, which generally have a more transparent pay structure than do private employers. This leaves a major hole in the state's otherwise relatively comprehensive equal pay legal structure.

Map of States with Equal Pay Provisions, 2020



Source: AAUW

On the positive side, a handful of states have particularly robust laws governing equal pay.

California, for example, limits the excuses employers can use to pay women less than men to only a “bona fide factor other than gender,” such as education, training, or

experience (as opposed to reasons based solely on gender stereotypes).

Maryland prohibits employers from withholding information

about promotions or assigning or directing employees into less-favorable career tracks—known as “mommy tracking.”

Massachusetts, as well as a growing number of other states and cities, prohibits employers from using the prior salary history of potential employees to set their future wages.

Colorado requires that job postings include the compensation or wage range, as well as information about benefits.

New Jersey requires all employers entering into a contract with the state to file a report with information about employee wages and hours categorized by gender, race, ethnicity, and job.

AAUW advocates that all states pass—and enforce—equal pay laws, as well as develop innovative ways to chip away at the gap. But state laws are not enough: We continue to push for federal pay equity legislation, regulation, and enforcement to protect employees and assist employers.

THE PAY GAP BY STATE

The pay gap varies considerably from state to state. Vermont has the narrowest gap: Women there are paid 91 cents for every dollar paid to a man. Wyoming has the broadest, with women being paid just 65 cents for a man's dollar. Interestingly, states with stronger laws do not necessarily have the smallest gaps. Strong pay equity laws help close the pay gap, but the gap itself is affected by other issues, such as occupational segregation, discrimination and workers' parental status.

Median Annual Earnings and Earnings Ratio by Sex, Ranked By State, 2019

State	Mens Earnings	Womens Earnings	Earnings Ratio	Earnings Gap	Rank
Vermont	51,212	46,616	91	9	1
Hawaii	52,033	46,524	89	11	2
Maryland	63,272	56,545	89	11	3
California	57,016	50,220	88	12	4
Nevada	46,706	40,775	87	13	5
New York	60,686	51,927	86	14	6
North Carolina	46,524	40,640	86	14	7
Rhode Island	57,278	48,566	85	15	8
Alaska	60,147	50,832	85	15	9
Connecticut	66,477	55,636	84	16	10
Arizona	49,773	41,496	83	17	11
Delaware	56,350	46,907	83	17	12
District of Columbia	87,603	72,750	83	17	13
Florida	45,136	37,458	83	17	14
New Hampshire	60,406	49,291	82	18	15
Minnesota	60,441	49,242	81	19	16
Massachusetts	70,483	57,289	81	19	17
Wisconsin	52,305	42,360	81	19	18
Georgia	50,346	40,481	80	20	19
Tennessee	47,626	38,284	80	20	20
New Jersey	67,007	53,810	80	20	21
Oregon	55,654	44,634	80	20	22
Missouri	50,558	40,496	80	20	23
Maine	51,029	40,873	80	20	24
Nebraska	51,412	41,148	80	20	25

State	Mens Earnings	Womens Earnings	Earnings Ratio	Earnings Gap	Rank
Colorado	60,334	48,258	80	20	26
Virginia	60,285	48,209	80	20	27
Kentucky	49,545	38,763	80	20	28
Kansas	51,291	40,848	80	20	29
Texas	51,125	40,670	80	20	30
Arkansas	44,631	35,467	79	21	31
Pennsylvania	55,221	43,791	79	21	32
Ohio	52,039	41,184	79	21	33
Washington	63,988	50,612	79	21	34
Illinois	58,579	45,967	78	22	35
Iowa	52,070	40,681	78	22	36
Michigan	53,150	41,475	78	22	37
New Mexico	46,982	36,659	78	22	38
Montana	49,778	38,752	78	22	39
South Carolina	48,541	37,584	77	23	40
Mississippi	43,024	33,140	77	23	41
West Virginia	46,946	37,748	76	24	42
North Dakota	54,899	41,718	76	24	43
Indiana	51,322	38,913	76	24	44
Idaho	48,861	36,761	75	25	45
South Dakota	50,196	37,765	75	25	46
Alabama	50,018	37,161	74	26	47
Oklahoma	49,721	36,494	73	27	48
Louisiana	51,733	37,075	72	28	49
Utah	57,117	39,784	70	30	50
Wyoming	57,339	37,302	65	35	51

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020). American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Survey. Data available at <https://data.census.gov/>
Notes: (1) Based on median earnings for full time, year-round workers; (2) Ranked by earnings ratio before rounding.