



FAST FACTS:

Economic Security for Women and Families in Maine

By Diana Boesch, Elena Wirth, and Osub Ahmed August 8, 2019

Lawmakers in Maine must do better to ensure all women and families have quality reproductive health care, safe workplaces, equal representation in government, and economic security.

Women need policies that reflect their roles as providers and caregivers. In Maine, mothers are the sole, primary, or co-breadwinners in 75 percent of families,¹ and these numbers are higher for some women of color. The following policy recommendations can help support the economic security of women and families in Maine.

Promote equal pay for equal work

Although federal law prohibits unequal pay for equal work, there is more that can be done to ensure that both women and men across Maine enjoy the fullest protections against discrimination.

- Maine women who are full-time, year-round workers earned about 82 cents for every dollar that Maine men earned in 2017;² if the wage gap continues to close at its current rate, women will not reach parity in the state until 2060.³ The wage gap is even larger for Latinas in the state, who earned 66.5 cents for every dollar that white men earned in 2017.⁴
- Due to the gender wage gap, each woman in Maine will lose an average of \$354,320 over the course of her lifetime.⁵

Increase the minimum wage

Women constitute a disproportionate share of low-wage workers; raising the minimum wage would help hardworking women across Maine and enable them to better support their families.

- Women make up nearly two-thirds of all minimum wage workers in the United States.⁶ Nearly 60 percent of all minimum wage workers in Maine are women.⁷
- In Maine, the current minimum wage is \$11 per hour.⁸ The minimum wage for workers who receive tips is \$5.50 per hour.⁹ The minimum wage in the state will increase to \$12 per hour in January 2020, and the tipped minimum wage will increase to \$6 per hour.¹⁰ More than three-quarters of tipped wage workers in Maine are women.¹¹
- Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2024 would boost wages for 114,000 women in Maine and more than 23 million women nationally.¹² Fifty-nine percent of Maine workers who would be affected by raising the minimum wage to \$15 are women.¹³

Guarantee access to quality health care

Women need access to comprehensive health services—including abortion and maternity care—in order to thrive as breadwinners, caregivers, and employees. To ensure women are able to access high-quality care, states should, at minimum, strengthen family planning programs such as Title X; protect Medicaid; and end onerous restrictions that reduce access to abortion care and undermine the patient-provider relationship. At the state level, Maine should ensure that women have access to the full spectrum of quality, affordable, and women-centered reproductive health services.

- In 2014, more than 78,800 women in Maine were in need of publicly funded family planning services and supplies, and 19 percent of those women were uninsured.¹⁴
- Title X—the nation’s only federal domestic program focused solely on providing family planning and other related preventive care, such as contraception, sexually transmitted infection testing, and cancer screenings—served about 19,700 women in Maine in 2017, down from 20,000 women in 2014.¹⁵ Title X funding in Maine has decreased, from \$2.4 million in 2014 to about \$1.8 million in 2019.¹⁶ Title X grantees will decline this federal funding as a result of the domestic gag rule, which bars providers from offering the full range of pregnancy-related services, including abortion care, referrals, and counseling.¹⁷
- However, Maine has also made progress in expanding access to abortion. This past June, Maine Gov. Janet Mills (D) signed into law two bills, one of which requires health insurance plans and Medicaid to cover abortion care and the other of which permits physician assistants and nurse practitioners with advanced training to administer abortion care.¹⁸
- Maine permits state Medicaid funds to cover abortion only in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment.¹⁹
- Maine’s infant mortality rate—5.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017—is slightly less than the national rate of 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017.²⁰

Ensure workers have access to paid sick days

Everyone gets sick, but not everyone is afforded the time to get better. Many women go to work sick, because they fear that they will be fired for missing work. Allowing employees to earn paid sick days helps keep families, communities, and the economy healthy.

- More than 34 million U.S. employees, or 29 percent of the nation's private sector workforce, do not have access to paid sick days.²¹
- Maine's governor signed legislation in May 2019 that requires businesses with more than 10 employees to give their workers up to 40 hours of paid time off yearly for illness or family emergencies starting January 1, 2021.^{22*}

Ensure fair scheduling practices

Many low-wage and part-time workers—approximately 60 percent of whom are women²³—face erratic work schedules and have little control over when they work and for how long.

- More than 1 in 4 low-wage U.S. workers has a schedule that is nonstandard—that is, outside of the traditional 9-to-5 workweek.²⁴ This can be especially difficult for parents who need to plan for child care.
- In addition to threatening the economic security of these workers and their families, unfair scheduling practices are often accompanied by reduced access to health benefits and increased potential for sexual harassment.²⁵

Provide access to paid family and medical leave

Access to paid family and medical leave would allow workers to be with their newborn children during the critical early stages of the child's life; to care for an aging family member; to recover from their own serious illness; or to assist in a loved one's recovery from a serious illness or injury.

- Only 17 percent of civilian workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employers.²⁶
- Unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is inaccessible to 67 percent of working people in Maine.²⁷ Workers and families in the state need paid family and medical leave for reasons other than childbirth. For example, 30 percent of workers in Maine are at least 55 years old, and in less than 15 years, the state's population that is 65 and older will grow by nearly one-half.²⁸ Maine's aging population means an increase in older adults with serious medical conditions who will need additional care.

- National data show that 55 percent of employees who take unpaid leave through the FMLA use it for personal medical reasons. Twenty-one percent of workers use leave for the birth or adoption of a child, while another 18 percent use it to care for a family member.²⁹

Expand quality, affordable child care

Families need child care to ensure they are able to work, but many lack access to affordable, high-quality child care options that support young children's development and meet the needs of working families.

- Seventy-three percent of Maine children younger than age 6 have all available parents in the workforce, which makes access to affordable, high-quality child care a necessity.³⁰
- For a Maine family with one infant and one 4-year-old, the annual price of a child care center averages \$18,819 per year,³¹ or about one-fourth of the median income for a family in Maine with children.³²
- Maine is ahead of the national average of children enrolled in public preschool, with about 44 percent of 4-year-olds enrolled.³³

Protect workers against all forms of gender-based violence

Women cannot fully participate in the economy if they face the threat of violence and harassment. There are a number of steps lawmakers can take to prevent violence against women and to support survivors, including establishing greater workplace accountability; strengthening enforcement; increasing funding for survivor support services; and educating the public on sexual harassment in the workplace.³⁴

- In Maine, 40 percent of women have experienced contact sexual violence in their lifetimes, and 35 percent of women have experienced noncontact sexual harassment.³⁵ Given that research at the national level suggests that as many as 70 percent of sexual harassment charges go unreported, these state numbers likely only scratch the surface.³⁶
- About 39 percent of Maine women have experienced intimate partner violence, which can include physical violence, sexual violence, or stalking by an intimate partner.³⁷ Experiencing intimate partner violence has been shown to hinder women's economic potential in many ways, including loss of pay from missed days of work and housing instability.³⁸

Protecting the rights of incarcerated women

The growing problem of mass incarceration in the United States hinders the economic potential of those affected and disproportionately harms communities of color.³⁹ Incarceration can have a particularly destabilizing effect on families with an incarcerated mother, especially if that woman is a breadwinner. The experience of incarceration is also uniquely traumatic for women in ways that can deter long-term economic security, even after release.⁴⁰

- The incarceration rate in Maine is 134 per 100,000 people.⁴¹ Approximately 9 percent of prisoners in Maine are women.⁴²
- Women are the fastest-growing segment of the overall U.S. prison population, but there are fewer federal prisons for women than there are for men, contributing to overcrowding and hostile conditions for incarcerated women.⁴³
- Incarcerated women suffer from a wide range of abuses at the hands of the prison system, including lack of access to menstrual hygiene products; lack of adequate nutrition and prenatal care; shackling during pregnancy and childbirth; and separation and further disruption from children for whom they are primary caregivers.⁴⁴

Promote women's political leadership

Across the United States, women are underrepresented in political office: They constitute 51 percent of the population but only 29 percent of elected officials.⁴⁵

- Women make up 51 percent of Maine's population but only 40 percent of its elected officials.⁴⁶
- Women of color constitute 3 percent of the state's population and only 1 percent of its officeholders.⁴⁷
- Gov. Mills became the first female governor in the state in 2019.⁴⁸

Diana Boesch is a research associate for women's economic security for the Women's Initiative at the Center for American Progress. Elena Wirth is a former intern for the Women's Initiative at the Center. Osub Ahmed is a senior policy analyst for women's health and rights with the Women's Initiative at the Center.

*** Correction, August 12, 2019:** This fact sheet has been updated to reflect that legislation signed by Maine's governor in May 2019 applies to businesses with more than 10 employees.

Endnotes

- 1 Sarah Jane Glynn, "Breadwinning Mothers Continue to Be the U.S. Norm" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2019), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/10/469739/breadwinning-mothers-continue-u-s-norm/>.
- 2 National Partnership for Women and Families, "American Women and the Wage Gap" (Washington: 2019), available at <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/fair-pay/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>.
- 3 Status of Women in the States, "The Economic Status of Women in Maine" (Washington: 2018), available at <https://statusofwomensdata.org/wp-content/themes/witsfull/factsheets/economics/factsheet-maine.pdf>.
- 4 National Women's Law Center, "The Wage Gap for Latina Women State Rankings: 2019 State Rankings" (Washington: 2019), available at <https://nwlc-ci49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Latina-Women-State-by-State-Dec-2018.pdf>.
- 5 National Women's Law Center, "Lifetime Wage Gap Losses for Women: 2019 State Rankings" (Washington: 2019), available at <https://nwlc-ci49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Women-Lifetime-Losses-State-by-State-2019.pdf>.
- 6 National Women's Law Center, "Women and the Minimum Wage, State by State" (Washington: 2018), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/women-and-minimum-wage-state-state/>.
- 7 National Women's Law Center, "Women and the Minimum Wage, State by State" (Washington: 2018), available at <https://nwlc-ci49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Women-Minimum-Wage-2018.pdf>.
- 8 Maine Department of Labor, "Minimum Wage FAQ," available at https://www.maine.gov/labor/labor_laws/minimum_wage_faq.html (last accessed July 2019).
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 National Women's Law Center, "Tipped Workers State by State" (Washington: 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Tipped-Workers-State-by-State-2.7.17.pdf>.
- 12 Economic Policy Institute, "State tables on \$15 minimum wage impact" (Washington: 2017), available at <https://www.epi.org/files/2017/MW-State-Tables.pdf>; David Cooper, "Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 would lift wages for 41 million American workers" (Washington: Economic Policy Institute, 2017), available at <https://www.epi.org/publication/15-by-2024-would-lift-wages-for-41-million/>.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Jennifer J. Frost, Lori Frohwirth, and Mia R. Zolna, "Contraceptive Needs and Services, 2014 Update" (New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2014), Table 3 and Table 6, available at https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/contraceptive-needs-and-services-2014_1.pdf.
- 15 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Assistant Secretary for Health, "Title X Family Planning Annual Report: 2014 National Summary" (Washington: 2015), Exhibit B-1, available at <https://www.hhs.gov/opa/sites/default/files/title-x-fpar-2014-national.pdf>; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, "Title X Family Planning Annual Report: 2017 National Summary" (Washington: 2018), Exhibit B-1, available at <https://www.hhs.gov/opa/sites/default/files/title-x-fpar-2017-national-summary.pdf>.
- 16 National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, "The Title X Family Planning Program in Maine," available at <https://www.nationalfamilyplanning.org/file/impact-maps-2017/ME.pdf> (last accessed July 2019).
- 17 Judy Harrison, "Maine Family Planning refuses \$2 million in federal funds over 'gag rule,'" *BDN Bangor*, July 16, 2019, available at <https://bangordailynews.com/2019/07/16/news/bangor/maine-family-planning-refuses-2-million-in-federal-funds-over-gag-rule/>.
- 18 Patty Wight, "Newly Blue, Maine Expands Access To Abortion," NPR, July 2, 2019, available at <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/07/02/737046658/newly-blue-maine-expands-access-to-abortion>.
- 19 Guttmacher Institute, "State Facts About Abortion: Maine" (New York: 2018), available at <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-maine>.
- 20 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Infant Mortality Rates by State: 2017," available at https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm (last accessed July 2019).
- 21 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2018" (Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, 2018), Table 32, available at <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2018/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2018.pdf>; National Partnership for Women and Families, "Paid Sick Days: Quick Facts," available at <http://www.paidicksdays.org/research-resources/quick-facts.html> (last accessed March 2019).
- 22 Mal Leary, "Mills Signs Paid Leave Bill Into Law," *Maine Public*, May 29, 2019, available at <https://www.mainepublic.org/post/mills-signs-paid-leave-bill-law>.
- 23 National Women's Law Center, "Collateral Damage: Scheduling Challenges for Workers in Low-Wage Jobs and Their Consequences" (Washington: 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/collateral-damage-scheduling-challenges-workers-low-wage-jobs-and-their-consequences/>; National Women's Law Center, "Part-Time Workers Are Paid Less, Have Less Access to Benefits—and Two-Thirds Are Women" (Washington: 2015), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/part-time-workers-are-paid-less-have-less-access-benefits%E2%80%94and-two-thirds-are-women/>.
- 24 National Women's Law Center, "Set Up For Success: Fair Schedules Are Critical for Working Parents and Their Children's Well-Being" (Washington: 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/set-up-for-success-why-fair-schedules-are-critical-for-working-parents-and-their-childrens-well-being/>; Maria E. Enchautegui, "Nonstandard Work Schedules and the Well-Being of Low-Income Families" (Washington: Urban Institute, 2013), available at <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/32696/412877-Nonstandard-Work-Schedules-and-the-Well-being-of-Low-Income-Families.PDF>.
- 25 Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Shirin Arslan, "Schedules That Work for Working Families," *Center for American Progress*, December 18, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2017/12/18/444245/schedules-work-working-families/>.
- 26 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics National Compensation Survey, "Employee Benefits Survey, Table 32. Leave benefits: Access, civilian workers, March 2018" available at <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2018/ownership/civilian/table32a.htm> (last accessed July 2019).
- 27 National Partnership for Women and Families, "Paid Leave Means a Stronger Maine" (Washington: 2019), available at <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-leave/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-maine.pdf>.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Jacob Alex Klerman, Kelly Daley, and Alyssa Pozniak, "Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report" (Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc., 2014), available at <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/fmla/FMLA-2012-Technical-Report.pdf>.

- 30 Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center, "Children under age 6 with all available parents in the labor force," available at <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force#detailed/2/2-53/false/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/any/11472,11473> (last accessed July 2019).
- 31 Child Care Aware of America, "2018 State Child Care Facts in the State of: Maine," available at https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3957809/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Maine_Facts.pdf?__hssc=122076244.1.1554906963642&__hstc=122076244.14d8096e6b55ce348d0af1bc1f3b573.1554906963641.1554906963641.1554906963641.1&__hsfp=2808568960&hsCtaTracking=5acf73b9-997c-400d-8502-44f4ba7679bf%7C3b3fc873-37d0-40ba-8fd8-cd0a6b8015ae (last accessed July 2019).
- 32 Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center, "Median family income among households with children in the United States," available at <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/65-median-family-income-among-households-with-children#detailed/2/2-53/false/871/any/365> (last accessed July 2019).
- 33 Allison H. Friedman-Krauss and others, "The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook" (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2019), available at http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/YB2018_Full-ReportR2.pdf.
- 34 Jocelyn Frye, "From Politics to Policy: Turning the Corner on Sexual Harassment," Center for American Progress, January 31, 2018, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2018/01/31/445669/politics-policy-turning-corner-sexual-harassment/>.
- 35 "Contact sexual violence includes rape, being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact." See Sharon G. Smith and others, "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010–2012 State Report" (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012), Table 3.9, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>. Noncontact unwanted sexual experiences include harassment, unwanted exposure to sexual body parts or making a victim show their body parts, and/or making a victim look at or participate in sexual photos or movies. See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Preventing Sexual Violence," available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/definitions.html> (last accessed July 2019).
- 36 Chai R. Feldblum and Victoria A. Lipnic, "Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace" (Washington: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016), available at https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/report.cfm.
- 37 Smith and others, "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey," Table 5.7.
- 38 Asha DuMonthier and Malore Dusenbery, "Intersections of Domestic Violence and Economic Security" (Washington: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016), available at <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/B362-Domestic-Violence-and-Economic-Security-1.pdf>.
- 39 Angela Hanks, "Ban the Box and Beyond: Ensuring Individuals with a Criminal Record Have Access to the Labor Market" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2017/07/27/436756/ban-box-beyond/>.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Jennifer Bronson and E. Ann Carson, "Prisoners in 2017" (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019), Table 6, available at <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p17.pdf>.
- 42 Ibid., Table 2.
- 43 Alec Hamilton, "For Female Inmates In New York City, Prison Is A Crowded, Windowless Room," NPR, January 16, 2017, available at <https://www.npr.org/2017/01/16/505315466/for-female-inmates-in-new-york-city-prison-is-a-crowded-windowless-room>.
- 44 Khala James, "Upholding the Dignity of Incarcerated Women," Center for American Progress, December 22, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2017/12/22/444468/upholding-dignity-incarcerated-women/>.
- 45 Reflective Democracy Campaign, "Who Leads Us? How Does Your State Rank in the National Representation Index?," available at <https://wholeads.us/electedofficials/> (last accessed July 2019).
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 WTMW, "Janet Mills makes history, becoming Maine's first woman governor," January 3, 2019, available at <https://www.wmtw.com/article/mills-prepares-to-make-history-as-maines-first-female-governor/25719461>.