



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 19, 2012

## Enough Already with the Women-Get-Paid-Less Nonsense

The intersex wage-gap question asked at the last presidential debate once again thrust the issue of equal pay for women into the headlines. And since Barack Obama and Mitt Romney are both vying for women — who vote in greater numbers than men do — both campaigns have been saying all the “right” things. Obama has touted his signing of the Lily Ledbetter Act, while the Republicans have [pointed out](#) that not only does the liberal network MSNBC pay its female employees less, so does, ironically, the [Obama administration](#) (by the way, Obama did the [same in his office](#) when he was a senator). Yet the truth on women’s pay is something neither candidate dare say.



Women aren’t given less.

They earn less.

The reality is that far from being a result of discrimination, the intersex wage gap — 72 cents on a man’s dollar, or 77 cents, or ... well, it depends on whom you listen to — is solely due to the sexes’ different lifestyle and career choices. Columnist Carrie Lukas explained this in 2007, [writing](#):

All the relevant factors that affect pay — occupation, experience, seniority, education and hours worked — are ignored [by those citing the wage gap]. This sound-bite statistic fails to take into account the different roles that work tends to play in men’s and women’s lives.

In truth, I’m the cause of the wage gap — I and hundreds of thousands of women like me. I have a good education and have worked full time for 10 years. Yet throughout my career, I’ve made things other than money a priority. I chose to work in the nonprofit world because I find it fulfilling. I sought out a specialty and employer that seemed best suited to balancing my work and family life. When I had my daughter, I took time off and then opted to stay home full time and telecommute. I’m not making as much money as I could, but I’m compensated by having the best working arrangement I could hope for.

Women make similar trade-offs all the time. Surveys have shown for years that women tend to place a higher priority on flexibility and personal fulfillment than do men, who focus more on pay. Women tend to avoid jobs that require travel or relocation, and they take more time off and spend fewer hours in the office than men do.

And here are some facts that back up Lukas’ thesis:

- US Census Bureau statistics tell us that full-time men average 2,213 working hours a year as compared to only 1,796 for “full-time” women.
- Women are also more likely to choose part-time work in the first place. For example, while only 1 in 20 male MBA-holders work part time, 1 in 3 female MBA-holders do.



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- Women tend to choose less lucrative fields such as the social sciences. As the Council of Graduate Schools [reports](#), while women earned less than 35 percent of the doctorates in the computer, physical and earth sciences, and math and engineering, they account for 60-plus percent of the Ph.D.s in the social/behavioral sciences and education.
- Women are more likely than men to turn down promotions, which would bring higher pay but also more responsibility, citing familial priorities.
- Women are more likely to leave their careers for long periods of time upon having children, which reduces seniority.

Having said this, the male-female wage gap is due to discrimination — that practiced by the market. In other words, when people value your contribution more highly, you get paid more.

Speaking of which, female fashion models typically get paid three times as much as their male peers, and heavyweight boxers fight for larger purses than do lightweights. Now, should the government intervene and eliminate these disparities? After all, there is an even better case to be made for this since “occupation, experience, seniority, education and hours worked” cannot explain them.

Yet such government meddling would actually lead to unjust discrimination. Why? Because we’d essentially be saying that everyone in the private sector could be compensated based on the market’s assessments of his merits *except certain politically-unfashionable groups*. It would be, to each according to his abilities unless that doesn’t meet our political needs.

And this discrimination is already befalling men. As columnist Carey Roberts [wrote](#):

Female physicists are getting \$6,500 more [than men]. Co-eds who majored in petroleum engineering are being offered \$4,400 more. And women computer programmers are being enticed with \$7,200 extra pay. In fact for dozens of majors and occupations, women coming out of college are getting better offers than men....

Why these disparities? Because in traditionally male-dominated professions, employers are willing to ante up more greenbacks to attract females in order to forestall a costly discrimination lawsuit.

Of course, this does help women, right? Not so fast. Remember, women have men as husbands and fathers. Now, if men get paid less because they have to subsidize the social-engineering dictated over-compensation of some female colleagues, they’ll be less able to support their families. This can force women who would otherwise choose to stay home to enter the workforce, thereby ripping them away from their sons and daughters.

So who are equal-pay measures really helping, the feminine sex or the feminist agenda?



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