

Gender Inequality in the United States Today

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Though the United States of America has made great strides in the equal treatment of women in recent decades, gender inequality still exists today. Modern examples of the disparate treatment of women in today's society include the existing wage gap and the lack of women in leadership positions in both the private and public sectors. These are only some of the areas that demonstrate the gender inequality that continues to pervade our society.

One of the greatest signs of gender inequality is the pay gap between men and women in the U.S. On average, women are paid much less than men for the same or similar work (Porter, 2014). In 2014, women in the U.S. earned only 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man and the median wage for men was almost \$11,000 more than the median salary for women (Wells, 2016). This type of wage disparity demonstrates that men's work and women's work is not valued and compensated equally, signaling a form of gender inequity.

Another sign that gender inequality is still an issue today may be found within the gender composition of leadership figures in the United States. In the public sector, a far greater percentage of men are elected to public office than women; the U.S. ranks 98<sup>th</sup> in the world for percentage of women the national legislature, which is down from 59<sup>th</sup> in 1998 (Hill, 2014). In the private sector, the representation rates for women in leadership positions are no better. Looking to the top 500 companies in the country, only 24 of the chief operating officers are female (Egan, 2015). These numbers suggest a dramatic lack of female representation in both public and private leadership roles and signal an ongoing gender inequity. Even private citizens are unconvinced that women will, in the near future, hold leadership positions at equal rates to

men. Instead, public polling suggests that a majority of those polled may feel “some skepticism about whether women will be able to overcome the obstacles that keep them out of top leadership positions, at least in business” (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Both the public perception of women in leadership and the actual numbers of women filling public and private leadership positions demonstrate the gender inequity implicit in today’s society. Women in America have made enormous strides towards equality. However, the disparate treatment of women in the workforce, both through pay differences and the number of women in positions of leadership, demonstrate that gender inequity is still a factor in the United States today.

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