

Equal Justice

NEWSLETTER OF THE NYS JUDICIAL COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE COURTS



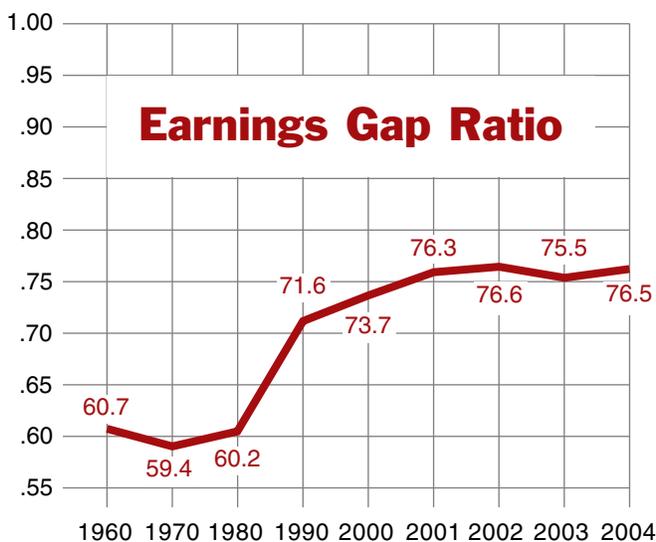
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Gender Wage Gap Remains Steady

Women working full-time still earn only 76 cents for every dollar earned by men. In 2004, the median earnings for women working full-time, year round, were \$31,233; for men, \$40,798.

Progress in the nineteen eighties raised women's earnings from 60 cents for every dollar earned by men (1980) to 72 cents (1990). The nineteen nineties added another 4 cents, so by 2001 women's earnings had reached 76 cents per man-earned dollar. Since 2001 women's earnings have made no appreciable gains.

The cumulative effects of this earnings gap are substantial. In 1984, young college-educated women, ages 25-29, working full-time, year round, earned (on the average) \$32,967 annually while their male counterparts earned \$43,696. Twenty years later, these same women, now aged 45-49, working full-time, year round, earned \$60,412 compared to college-educated men who earned \$97,255. The average cumulative loss for women during those two decades was \$440,743.



Information from the Institute for Women's

Policy Research http://www.iwpr.org/Employment/Research_employment.htm

MORE WOMEN LAW PARTNERS IN NEW YORK CITY

Women in the past two years have made noticeable inroads into the predominately male ranks of partners in New York City law firms. According to the New York City Bar Association, which collects information on diversity at law firms and corporate law departments, in 2005 women comprised 29.1% of those offered partnerships in the 93 reporting law firms, up from 20.3% in 2003. Women were also 20.1% of lateral partner hires in 2005, a substantial increase from 12.8% in 2003. In contrast, the percent of racial/ethnic minority lawyers offered partnerships changed little from 2003 to 2005. Both women and minorities experienced high rates of turnover.

Longer Criminal Orders of Protection. (Laws of 2006, ch 215) Victims of domestic violence, as well as other crimes victims, have been provided with additional protection from convicted criminals. Under recently signed legislation, a judge may impose on a defendant convicted of a felony an order of protection for as long as eight years from the date of conviction or eight years beyond the end of a sentence (up from five years in previous legislation). For a Class A misdemeanor, a judge can grant an order of protection for a maximum of five years (up from three years), and for other convictions three-year orders may be granted (up from one year).

Increased Statute of Limitations for Sex Offense. (Laws of 2006, ch. 3) Victims of rape and sexual assault gained added legal protections from legislation extending statutes of limitations for both civil and criminal cases. The new law addresses the most serious sexual offenses: rape in the first degree, criminal sexual act in the first degree, aggravated sexual abuse in the first degree, and sexual conduct against a child in the first degree. All are Class B felonies.

For criminal cases brought under these sections, the statutes of limitations have been eliminated altogether. Prosecutions for these crimes, like those for murder, can be brought no matter how much time has elapsed. In civil cases, a victim may bring a lawsuit up to five years after one of these crimes was committed or after a conviction.

Right to Appointed Counsel Given for Indigent Parties in Matrimonial Cases. (Laws of 2006, ch. 538) Under new legislation, judges must offer state-paid attorneys to indigent spouses litigating certain kinds of claims. Technically, the legislation amends Judicial Law, Section 35, to require Supreme Court judges to appoint counsel in cases in which the Family Court litigants have a right to counsel. Practically, it gives indigent parties litigating custody and visitation cases, as well as requests for orders of protections and orders of contempt, the right to an attorney.

Dr. Melissa Farley Speaks on Prostitution and Human Trafficking

Dr. Melissa Farley, a research and clinical psychologist who is the principal investigator on a nine-country study of prostitution, trafficking, and posttraumatic stress disorder, addressed an audience of 65 judges and other court personnel at the Judicial Institute on November 9, 2006.

Dr. Farley's study concluded that "Violence is the norm for women in prostitution," and that brothel prostitution is as dangerous as street prostitution. Physical assault and rape are commonplace. Posttraumatic stress disorder afflicted the majority (68%) of the individuals interviewed. The study found that "The severity of PTSD symptoms of participants . . . was in the same range as treatment-seeking combat veterans. . . and refugees from state-organized torture."

Information from interviews with over 800 people currently or recently in prostitution was gathered for the study. Included were individuals from countries in which prostitution is legal as well as countries in which it is illegal. The nine countries were Canada, Columbia, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the United States, and Zambia.

"For example, 75% of the Canadian women [in, or recently in, prostitution] we interviewed suffered injuries from violence that occurred during prostitution. These included stabbings and beatings, concussions, broken bones (broken jaws, ribs, collar bones, fingers, spines, skulls). Half of the Canadian women suffered traumatic head injuries as a result of violent assaults."

Melissa Farley et al. "Prostitution in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," *Journal of Trauma Practice*, Vol.2, No.3/4, 2003, pp. 33-74.