IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

TESTIMONY
Concerning H.R. 1
Civil Rights Act of 1991

Before the U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and Labor
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by
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SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

This testimony uses the results of social science research to describe the importance of women’s earnings for family survival, the continued existence of wage and job discrimination, and the effectiveness of civil rights and anti-discrimination policies—where implemented and enforced. Given the increasing diversity of the workforce and the negative effect of discrimination on economic growth, these findings suggest that strengthening the Civil Rights Act through H.R. 1 is both necessary and desirable, not only for workers and families, but also for improving U.S. economic performance.

The findings reported in the testimony include:

- Families are increasingly dependent on women’s earnings; 2/3 of families with children depend on mothers’ earnings for family well-being.

- Despite some progress, there is still a substantial wage gap between women and men; in 1989 median earnings for women who worked full-time year-round were only 68 percent of median earnings for men who worked full-time year-round.

- A "glass ceiling" affects women’s and minority men’s earnings and opportunities—women especially are not rewarded for their greater years of work experience. Median earnings for women year-round full-time workers aged 40-44 are $22,000, about the same as the median earnings for men just starting out, aged 25-29.

- About half of the gap in earnings between women and men can be explained by discriminatory employment practices, according to the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council in a 1981 report.

- Women earn less in nearly every occupation and have lesser access to high wage firms and industries.

- There is striking sex segregation between and within occupations, with some firms consistently exhibiting more segregation than would result from sex-neutral hiring, given the mix of occupations they employ, and more firms doing this than would be expected by chance.

- Occupations held predominantly by women (and minority men) pay substantially less than male-dominated or mixed occupations, even when the difficulty of performing the work is equal. In a 1986 report, the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Women's Employment and Related Social Issues found that 35 to 40 percent of the overall wage gap between women and men could be attributed to occupational segregation.

- Regardless of human capital and job characteristics, women and minority men are more likely to earn low wages than their white male counterparts. Minority women are 4 times more likely, white women 3 times more likely, and minority men 1.5 times more likely than white men to earn low wages, even when similarly qualified.
At the upper end of the job hierarchy, women and minority men find they are not well-represented in the pool from which the highest echelons will be filled. For example, among white male managers and executives, 10 percent earned more than $78,000 per year in 1990, while only 1 percent of white, black, or Hispanic women managers, 4 percent of all black male managers, and 7 percent of all Hispanic male managers earned that much.

The labor market barriers that prevent the full and productive employment of women and minorities are damaging to U.S. economic growth. A 1979 study by the Congressional Research Service found that in 1978 GNP would have been 4.4 percent higher than it actually was if blacks had not been discriminated against. Preliminary calculations by IWPR suggest that when women as well as blacks are included in the calculation, GNP would be about 15 percent higher.

Legal remedies (when implemented and enforced) are successful methods for overcoming labor market barriers and have positive effects on decreasing job segregation and increasing women's employment, job tenure, and wages.
Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Heidi Hartmann, director of the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), an independent, scientific research institute specializing in research on policy issues of special importance to women. I am trained as a labor economist and hold the Ph.D. degree in economics from Yale University. With me here today is Dr. Roberta Spalter-Roth, a sociologist at George Washington University and Deputy Director for Research at IWPR, who is available to respond to your comments and questions. We are pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you today as you consider the Civil Rights Act of 1991. We would like to provide a brief summary of major social science research findings concerning women's economic and family status, the employment situation of women and minorities, and the impact of past civil rights legislation on earnings and employment. A central conclusion of our testimony is that the U.S. cannot afford not to deal with discrimination. If we want to compete effectively, we must strengthen the U.S. economy by ensuring equal employment opportunity for all workers.

Overview of Women's Economic and Family Status

The extent to which women participate in the labor force has increased dramatically in the past several decades, and their contribution to family incomes has grown correspondingly. In 1990, 58 percent of all women over 16 years of age worked, and 67 percent of all mothers were in the labor force, an all-time high since these data have been collected and analyzed.

Figure 1 shows that, for families with children, the dual earner couple is now the norm: 48 percent, or nearly half, of all families with children had both parents in the work force in 1988, an increase from 36 percent in 1975. The single parent family, in which the only available parent is working, has also grown rapidly as a proportion of all families, from 11 percent of all families with children in 1975 to 19 percent in 1988. At the same time, the "traditional" family, the two-parent family in which only the father works for wages, has fallen from 44 percent of all families with children to 25 percent. (There are also 9 percent of all families with no working parents.)
FIG. 1. THE INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN WORKERS FOR FAMILY FINANCIAL NEEDS
(PERCENT OF ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN EACH FAMILY TYPE)

Two-thirds of all families with children depend on the woman's earnings to achieve their current standard of living. These data illustrate the importance of women's earnings to family well-being, especially to the well-being of families with children, but women's earnings are also important in families without children and to women who live alone and have only themselves to depend upon.

**Women's Place in the Labor Market**

In 1990 women constituted 45 percent of the labor force overall. Using the standard comparison provided by the Census Bureau, median earnings of full-time, year-round workers, women earned 68 percent of men's earnings in 1989. The female-male wage gap closed somewhat during the late 70's and throughout the 80's; the ratio was at 59 percent in 1975. (Looking at yet another wage series, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women's median weekly earnings, for full-time workers, averaged 72 percent of men's during 1990.)

By nearly all measures, women's earnings have improved relative to men's (although it should be kept in mind that part of the improvement in the ratio is due to the fall in men's real wages, which have still not recovered to their peak in 1973; during the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's women have been more likely to hold jobs in growing sectors and men in shrinking sectors experiencing real wage declines). Yet relative to equality, and to the progress towards equality women have made in other countries, women in the U.S. could be expected to have done better. For example, from 1970 to 1985, the female-male wage ratio in Australia improved from 59 to 75 percent, an improvement of 16 percentage points in 15 years. In the U.S., the improvement was 9 percentage points in 14 years.

Differing groups of women have fared differently in the U.S. For example, women of color earn less than white women and men of color earn less than white men. For black women relative to white men, the earnings ratio was 61 percent in 1989, for Hispanic women relative to
white men, it was 55. For most of the 1970's and 1980's the wage gap between women of color and white men was closing, but during the 1980's progress slowed considerably.

Age-Earnings Profiles

Age is particularly important in understanding the wage gap between women and men. How does the female-male wage ratio differ at different ages? Figure 2 displays the median earnings of full-time, year-round workers, for workers aged 15 through 64 in 1989. The wage gap is much larger between older women and men than it is between younger women and men. In fact, for women in the labor force today, median earnings peak at age 40-44, an age at which they are earning about the same as men aged 25-29, who are just starting out, about $22,000 per year. This annual earnings figure, which is the "glass ceiling" faced by all women workers, not only women in management, merits serious thought. A mature woman worker in the United States, with substantial years of work experience, working full-time, year-round, earns just $22,000 per year. What seems clear is that women workers, in contrast to men, are simply not rewarded for their greater years of experience as they age.

Men's earnings peak at ages 45-49; at that age, men are earning, on average, $35,000 and the gap between women and men is $14,000, for a wage ratio of 60 percent. At the younger end, ages 25-29, the gap is $4,000, and the wage ratio is 86.4 percent. (The more favorable earnings ratio for younger women and men than for older women and men has held true since such data have been collected.)

How much of this growing gap as women age is due to discrimination on the part of employers--discrimination in hiring, in earnings, in on-the-job training, in providing job-protected leave, in promotion and advancement? How much of it is due to the different choices women made over their life cycle, to invest more in children and family and less in education and the work place, or to discrimination beyond the work place, such as in the educational system? Economists disagree about the answers to these questions, but based upon the
FIG. 2. THE FEMALE-MALE WAGE GAP OVER THE LIFE CYCLE  
(1989 MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS, FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS, BY AGE)

accumulation of many research studies, including two National Academy of Sciences reports on women’s employment, it is safe to estimate that about half the gap between women’s and men’s average wages is due to employment discrimination, that is to unequal treatment in the workplace, and about half is due to the lesser amount of human capital women workers have been able to attain. Women workers today do have less labor market experience than do men. (It should also be pointed out that women’s decisions to invest less in education and work experience in the past—decisions that are changing for today’s young women—may have been based on their perception that rewards to their investment would also be less as well as on barriers they may have faced in the educational system.)

When we consider whether a glass ceiling prevents women (and minority men) from reaching the topmost echelons of employment, we must also consider the barriers that have held them back every step of the way. Few are even in a position from which they can attempt to break through to the highest echelons. The average woman worker faces an earnings peak at $22,000 per year at ages 40-44. The ‘glass ceiling’ is lower than we think!

Another important question these data raise is whether today’s young women will fare better than their mothers did. Will today’s young women, who are making different decisions about investing time in education and the labor market, face as much discrimination as they age or not? Young women today are earning more than half the bachelors’ and masters’ degrees and 40 percent of the Ph.D. degrees, and they are pursuing courses of study that are more like those men study, earning degrees in business, law, medicine, and computer science. How well these women will fare is not a question research can yet answer; we will simply have to wait and see. But we have seen that, since 1975, the wage ratio has improved for all but the oldest age groups, when calculated, as above, on the basis of median annual earnings for full-time, full-year workers. For example, for workers aged 35 to 39 years, the female-male wage ratio was 52 percent in 1975, 57 percent in 1980, and 66 percent in 1989. For workers aged 25 to 29 years, the ratio improved from 69 percent in 1975 to 73 percent in 1980 to 82 percent in 1989. These
data are cause for some optimism, but they nevertheless demonstrate a growing earnings gap as women age.

**Barriers Women Face in the Labor Market**

If we can agree that about half the wage gap is due to the life choices women have made -- choices that may themselves not have been entirely free but may have been constrained in various ways -- and that half is due to unequal treatment in the labor market, let us examine the remaining labor market barriers women face.

**Women Earn Less Than Men.** Two labor market features stand out for women--one is that in nearly every occupation women earn less than men. Female physicians earn less than male physicians (82 percent in 1990 for median weekly wages of full-time workers); female bus drivers earn less than male bus drivers (76 percent); female secondary school teachers earn less than male secondary school teachers (94 percent); female accountants earn less than male accountants (75 percent); and female billing clerks earn less than male billing clerks (74 percent). Even in some of the highest-wage occupations that women have been entering, wage ratios are distressingly low, and have not improved; for example, the representation of women among lawyers increased from 15 to 21 percent between 1983 and 1990, while the female-male wage ratio declined from 88 to 74 percent. Again, some of these wage differences are due to women's lesser human capital, but some are due to discrimination.

Women, even in the same occupations as men, appear to have lesser access to the high wage firms and industries. An important study by Francine Blau showed that for women and men in integrated white collar occupations, women were more likely to be in lower-wage firms and industries in each labor market, while men were more likely to be in higher-wage firms and industries.4 Thus women and men were segregated between firms, even when they were in reasonably integrated occupations.
Women and Men Work in Different Jobs. The second significant labor market feature is the substantial sex segregation between occupations that is observed. Women and men do not generally work in the same occupations, and even when they do, as in the example of integrated clerical occupations above, they tend to work in different firms. Data on sex segregation among occupations show that women tend to work in occupations in which other women work, that is in predominately female occupations, while men tend to work in occupations populated by other men. In 1980, the most recent census for which data are available, 48 percent of all women worked in occupations that were at least 80 percent female. These occupations included many clerical occupations (bank tellers, bookkeepers, cashiers, receptionists, secretaries) and service occupations (practical nurses, childcare workers, hairdressers). For men, the proportion working in occupations that were more than 80 percent male was even higher, 71 percent. These occupations included many professions (engineers, dentists), skilled crafts (carpenters, electricians, machinists), and operatives (meat cutters, forklift operators). In an important study of sex segregation within firms, William Bielby and James Baron found an astonishing number of sex-segregated job titles. Using data from 393 firms that had been collected by the California State Employment Service between 1959 and 1979, they found that 30 firms employed workers of only one sex; in an additional 201 firms, no women and men worked in the same job titles. Thus three-fifths of the firms studied were totally segregated by sex.

Although some of the segregation observed may occur because of circumstances other than employer actions, it is hard to escape the conclusion that much of the segregation observed is caused by discrimination in hiring and promotion, barriers which limit women's employment opportunities, even given the educational choices women make. As Blau found, some firms consistently exhibit more segregation than would result from sex-neutral hiring within the occupations they employ, and more firms do this than would be expected by chance. Overall, the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Women's Employment and Related Social
Issues concluded that "the weight of scientific evidence indicates that discrimination has played a significant role in maintaining a sex-segregated work force" (p. 126) and that "job segregation by sex would be substantially reduced if barriers were removed" (p. 124).

Among the discriminatory practices that perpetuate sex segregation and limit women's opportunities cited in the NAS report are: recruiting workers from predominantly male settings (such as the military or vocational education classes) or recruiting through worker referrals; requiring nonessential training or credentials that women often lack; veterans' preference policies; promotion and transfer rules that force workers to give up seniority if they transfer to other departments; and factors such as inhospitable work climates and sexual harassment. Many of these are systemic factors; the report also cites cultural attitudes held by some employers that lead them to discriminate against women in particular jobs (p. 126).

The National Academy of Sciences Committee on Women's Employment, as well as other observers, have been concerned about the degree of sex segregation observed in the labor market because it almost certainly limits women's earning power. A variety of studies have shown that those occupations that are dominated by women pay substantially less than those that are not, and this is true even when the difficulty of performing different occupations is held equal. In other words, the sex of a job's incumbents has an influence on a job's wage rate, independent of the skills required to perform the job. An earlier NAS committee, the Committee on Occupational Classification and Analysis, found that in 1970 occupations that were dominated by women pay $27.50 less per year for each additional percentage point female, even when occupational requirements were taken into account; thus an all-female job paid about $2,700 less per year than an all-male job of similar skill requirements. A study commissioned recently by the Panel on Pay Equity Research of the Committee on Women's Employment shows that, within the California Civil Service, starting salaries fell as minorities and women entered jobs, even though the qualifications required remained the same. The presence of
women and minorities in a job title devalued the job. The issue of pay equity is an important one for women and minority workers.

Thus the two most striking labor market features for women, women’s lower wages and their segregation in a narrow range of occupations, are related. In its 1986 report, the NAS Committee on Women’s Employment found that about 35 to 40 percent of the overall wage gap between women and men could be attributed to occupational segregation (p. 123).

Barriers Minorities Face

Minority male workers face many of the same barriers women of all races face, including employer attitudes that lead to discrimination in hiring, compensation, training, and promotion, and recruitment and assignment practices that tend to limit their employment opportunities and cause pay inequities. It should be noted, however, that over the past several decades, racial segregation appears to have declined much more than sex segregation in the labor market, at least when national level occupational data are considered. Nevertheless, lower earnings remain a significant problem for all minorities, with, for example, black males earning 72 percent of white males in 1989, and Hispanic males earning 64 percent.

A recent IWPR study documents the pervasiveness of race and sex discrimination in the labor market by comparing the probability of being in a low wage job across race, ethnic, and gender groups. As shown in the accompanying chart, when comparisons were made holding human capital and labor market variables constant, that is considering only those workers who had similar amounts of human capital and worked in similar occupations and industries, women of color were 4 times more likely than white males to work in low wage jobs, white women were 3 times more likely, and men of color were 1.5 times more likely.
who earn low wages at least 7 out of 12 months.

Note: The study included adult workers who worked at least 500 hours in 1994. Low wages were defined as $6.33 per hour or less in 1999.

Minority men are 1.5 times as likely as white men to work in low wage jobs.

Minority women are three times as likely as white men to work in low wage jobs.

White women are four times as likely as white men to work in low wage jobs.

For equivalent education and work experience, race and gender influence the probability of working in a low-wage job, even.

An IWP study based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation.

IN THE LABOR MARKET

RACE AND SEX DISCRIMINATION ARE PREVALENT
Women and Minorities in Top Jobs

Data at the upper end of the employment scale also illustrate the substantial barriers women and minorities face. They are not yet present in sufficient numbers in the pool of managers from whom the very top leadership positions would be filled. For example, 1990 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on the earnings distribution for workers in executive, administrative and managerial jobs, show that 30 percent of white males in this occupational category earned more than $52,000 per year, compared with only 7.4 percent of white women. For black and Hispanic women, the proportions were somewhat lower: 6.8 and 7.2 percent respectively. Minority men are also less likely than white men to reach the higher echelons of work status. Only 11.2 percent of black men and 19.6 percent of Hispanic males in executive and managerial jobs earned over $52,000 annually, compared with the 30 percent for white males. At the highest earnings level for which data are available, $78,000 or more per year, 10 percent of all white male managers earn that much, compared to only 1 percent of white women managers, black women managers and Hispanic women managers, 4 percent of black male managers, and 7 percent of Hispanic male managers. Women and minority men are thus in a much less favorable position from which to be selected.

Economic Growth--The Costs of Discrimination

The remaining labor market barriers that prevent the full employment of women and minorities are damaging to the U.S. economy as a whole, as well as to the individuals who experience them directly. This is increasingly so as the U.S. workforce continues to diversify by sex, race, and ethnicity. Recent labor force growth has been disproportionately female and minority, and eighty percent of the net labor force growth projected to the year 2000 will consist of women and minority men. At the same time, we are witnessing a deterioration in the conditions of work. Employer-worker relations are becoming more tenuous as part-time,
temporary, and contingent jobs grow increasingly rapidly. Most of the job growth in the 1980's occurred in low wage jobs.

In our view, these two trends, the diversifying labor force and the deteriorating conditions of work, are related. Fewer good jobs at good wages are available because employers are more reluctant to invest in minority and female workers. Many employers structure jobs to anticipate lower skills and higher turnover, believing that women and minority men lack the capacity and behavioral traits necessary for learning to perform higher skilled work productively. Their employment practices reflect these stereotypes as they pursue cost reduction strategies via the development of low-wage, low-productivity jobs. But, that strategy is short sighted; in the long run the United States cannot compete with other countries via low wages, nor should we aspire to do so, for low wages mean a low standard of living. The U.S. must compete via high-wage, high-productivity jobs; this strategy requires substantial investment in all workers, including women and minority men.

The failure to employ women and minority men to their full potential results in a productivity loss that is substantial. In a 1979 study, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) found that wage and employment differentials between whites and nonwhites resulted in a loss to GNP of $93.5 billion in 1978.\textsuperscript{13} Had nonwhites had the same labor market position as whites, GNP would have been 4.4 percentage points higher than it actually was in 1978. The CRS did not attempt to differentiate between those losses that were due to discrimination in employment and those that were due to other factors, such as lower educational attainment or poorer health status among nonwhites. Rather they argued that unemployment and wages would have been equalized between whites and nonwhites if all forms of discrimination, latent and overt, in all aspects of US life had been eliminated. We have not been able to locate more recent estimates that also include the losses due to unequal employment of ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, or of women, but if women are included, we estimate that the loss to GNP currently is about 15 percent.
Given the demographic changes underway, changes that are increasing the number and proportions of minorities and women in the labor force, strategies that strengthen equal treatment will also ensure improved productivity and greater economic growth for the U.S. Strengthening equal employment opportunity policies should be seen not only as a way to ensure labor market fairness to all workers, not only as a way to ensure equal pay for equal work, but also as a way to enhance economic growth, a way to increase the size of the pie for everyone.

The Effectiveness of Legal Remedies

Available research studies on the quantitative effects of equal employment opportunity enforcement show that stronger enforcement brings greater gains. For example, in states where enforcement efforts were stronger (enforcement efforts were measured by the number of investigations of charges and the number of settlements), Andrea Beller found that more investigations led to larger increases in the ratio of female to male earnings, and that increases were larger after the 1972 Amendments to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act than they were before the amendments. Beller found that the differential between male and female earnings fell by 14 percent in the private sector between 1967 and 1974, with most of the gain coming in the post-1972 period. She attributes the improvement to the right given to individuals to pursue their claims in the courts. Likewise, the 1986 report of the NAS Committee on Women’s Employment also found that in industries that were targeted by enforcement authorities (for example, construction, coal mining, banking, and telecommunications) results were substantial. Based on these findings, we suggest that additional mechanisms that increase the cost of discriminating to the employer will reduce the amount of discrimination workers face.

A recent IWPR study shows how effective a change in legal interpretation can be. As a result of the Supreme Court’s 1976 interpretation of Title VII in *Gilbert v. General Electric*, the U.S. Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) of 1978, to affirm that
discrimination against pregnancy was to be considered a form of sex discrimination. The intent of the PDA is to ensure that women affected by pregnancy and related medical conditions be treated the same as other employees--on the bases of their ability or inability to work--in all areas of employment including hiring, firing, seniority rights, and the receipt of fringe benefits.

In the hearings prior to its passage, opponents to the bill, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Retail Federation, and the Health Insurance Association of America testified that the PDA would substantially increase the costs to business, create unfair economic burdens, and might actually lead to an increase in discrimination against women of child bearing age. To cast light on the heated rhetoric that surrounds government efforts to afford equal rights to all workers, IWPR assessed the costs and benefits of the PDA in the ten years since its implementation.

We found substantial benefits to women workers. First, the PDA did not have negative effects on the employment of women of childbearing age--who continued to enter the workforce in record numbers. In fact, their employment rates between 1978 and 1988 increased at a greater rate than any other age/gender group in the population. Second, the PDA gave pregnant women workers access to temporary disability insurance, increasing their job tenure and wages. In 1988, those women workers with short term disability coverage, most of whom had coverage because of the PDA, earned an additional $57.40 per week. For all women with coverage, additional earnings amounted to $1 billion for the year. Those new mothers without disability benefits lost an estimated $530 million in 1988 as a result of job loss.

The change in women's labor market behavior was so large in the 1978 to 1988 period, the increase in women's return to work after child birth so great, that one is forced to conclude that employer behavior prevented many women from returning to work previously. Many employers must have terminated women's employment at pregnancy and child birth, or many women believed their jobs would not be held for them and so resigned. When women realized these jobs would, by law, be held open for them (if employers held jobs open for similarly
ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO WOMEN WORKERS
OF THE PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1978

- Between 1977 and 1988, the employment rates for women of prime childbearing age (25-34) increased more than for any other age/gender group; the PDA did not have a negative effect on the employment of this group of women as some had feared.

- Access to short term disability benefits increased for pregnant women and new mothers, increasing job tenure and wages.

- By 1985, more than 70 percent of women workers with disability leave benefits returned to work within six months after childbirth compared to 43 percent of those without benefits.

- New mothers with short-term disability insurance worked an additional 14 weeks in 1988 compared to those without this benefit; the latter suffered additional weeks of unemployment, more time looking for work, and greater likelihood of working for a new employer.

- New mothers with short-term disability insurance earned an additional $57.40 per week: $1 billion annually for all new mothers in 1988.


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disabled men), many women took advantage of their reemployment rights. This simple change in employer policy, brought about by a clarification of the meaning of Title VII, had such a large impact on women's earnings precisely because it improved women's ability to gain work experience, especially tenure with the same employer. Such job tenure leads to improved wages and improved on-the-job training and advancement opportunities.

**Recommendations**

Given the barriers that remain in the labor market and the efficacy of past legal remedies and enforcement efforts, strengthening the Civil Rights Act through enactment of H.R.1 is both necessary and desirable. For women and minority workers to receive equal pay and employment opportunities, both increased legal remedies and stronger enforcement are needed. Allowing aggrieved individuals to sue for damages strengthens enforcement; this provision can be expected to be reflected in future earnings and employment data, which will likely show an impact of this enforcement advance.

Furthermore, only with improved earnings and employment opportunities for women, both white and minority, and for minority men, can the U.S. economy achieve greater productivity gains and higher rates of economic growth. The slow economic growth of the past decade and the changing demographic composition of the labor force, in particular the influx of women and minorities into the work force, make improving equal opportunity for all workers an economic necessity as well as a matter of fairness and basic job rights. Fair pay and equal employment opportunities for workers traditionally discriminated against enhance the size of the pie for all workers.

Additional aspects of the employment situation of women, and minority men, might lead the Committee to consider supplemental measures. An independent commission that could monitor the work of the federal government on ensuring equal employment opportunities is
needed, especially one that would focus especially on women's needs or on the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.

For many decades, the Citizens' Advisory Commission on the Status of Women, and its successors, played a "watchdog" role, alerting the public to the special policy needs of women workers. Reestablishing such a Commission, perhaps under the auspices of the Congress, would provide permanent benefits. Among the special issues that deserve study and advocacy now are barriers to the advancement of women and minorities at the upper echelon of business and government and the steps needed to allow these workers to break the "glass ceiling." As the research reported here shows, however, such an investigation also requires study of what blocks women and minority men every step of the way, and in particular, what employment practices result in the negative outcomes observed for mature women, the very women who should be poised to enter the topmost jobs, yet are left far behind. Such a Commission could also serve a continuing function of monitoring the work of enforcement agencies.

For example, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP) currently collects affirmative action plans and supporting information from employers with federal contracts during the course of compliance reviews and complaint investigations; these documents provide information on the race and sex composition of the workers in each firm's jobs and job groups. These data provide a very good window on the sex and race segregation that still exists within U.S. firms and on earnings differentials. Without revealing the progress of individual firms, an annual OFCCP report could chart the progress US employers in the aggregate (or grouped by industry or region of the country or size of firm) are making in reducing the extent of race and sex segregation and wage inequities.

The EEOC could report annually on the content of the EEO-1 forms that are submitted by all large employers in the US. Unlike the reports submitted by employers to the OFCCP, the EEO-1 data are reported only for very large occupational groups, rather than for specific job titles, but they are reported for detailed industry groupings. What do these data show about
equal employment opportunity in the United States—are the large occupational categories
becoming more integrated, for which industries? In which states is progress greater or less? If
all private employers were required, as local and state governments and institutions of higher
education now are, to also report wage data, progress in reducing sex- and race-based wage
discrimination could also be monitored and reported.

Annual reports could be required of both the OFCCP and the EEOC, utilizing the data
they already collect. These data are (for the most part) not available to researchers and so are
currently virtually unused. They should be used to produce annual reports on how much
progress American business and industry (including state and local government) are making
toward achieving fair pay and equal employment opportunity. Finally, the Women’s
Commission itself could issue an annual report card on the progress made in integrating women
(and minority men) in the workforce and assuring fair rewards for all workers.

Whether these supplemental measures are considered or not, the research evidence
suggests that enactment of H.R. 1 will, by strengthening our existing civil rights laws, benefit all
U.S. workers and the economy as a whole.
ENDNOTES


4. Within the narrowly defined occupations that she investigated, Blau believed the human capital differences would be slight; she argued therefore that their preponderance in low-wage firms was not due to women's lesser qualifications. Francine D. Blau, *Equal Pay in the Office*, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass., 1977.


