The Status of Women in West Virginia, 2004: Highlights

West Virginia reflects both the advances and limited progress achieved by women in the United States. Women in West Virginia and the United States as a whole are seeing important changes in their lives and in their access to political, economic, and social rights. However, they by no means enjoy equality with men, and they still lack many of the legal guarantees that would allow them to achieve that equality. Women in West Virginia and the nation would benefit from stronger enforcement of equal opportunity laws, better political representation, adequate and affordable child care, and other policies that would help improve their status.

The rankings and grades for each of the composite indices in Chart 1 were calculated by combining data on several indicators of women's status in each of five areas. These data were used to compare women in West Virginia with women in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, they were used to evaluate women's status in West Virginia in comparison with women's ideal status, as reflected in the state's grades.

The advances women have made are not experienced equally by all women. Persistent inequalities evident in Chart 2 mean that many women of color experience disparities in their economic, political, social, and health status. West Virginia can improve the status of women of color by addressing ongoing racial and ethnic disparities in the state.

Chart 1.
How West Virginia Ranks on Key Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>National Rank*</th>
<th>Regional Rank*</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Political Participation Index</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Voter Registration, 1998 and 2000 (64.4% registered)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Voter Turnout, 1998 and 2000 (44.4% voted)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Elected Office Composite Index, 2004</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Institutional Resources, 2004</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Employment and Earnings Index</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Median Annual Earnings, 2002 ($24,900)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings, 2002 (72.6%)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Labor Force Participation, 2002 (48.8% of women are in the labor force)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Managerial and Professional Occupations, 2001 (30.5%)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Social and Economic Autonomy Index</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with Health Insurance Among Nonelderly Women, 2001-02 (81.2%)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment: Percent of Women with Four or More Years of College, 2000 (14.0%)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Business Ownership, 1997 (27.1% of businesses are owned by women)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 2002 (83.1%)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Reproductive Health Index</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Health and Well-Being Index</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
See Appendix II of The Status of Women in the States for a detailed description of the methodology and sources used for the indices presented here.
* The national rankings are of a possible 51, referring to the 50 states and the District of Columbia, except for the Political Participation indicators, which do not include the District of Columbia. The regional rankings are of a maximum of nine and refer to the states in the South Atlantic region (DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV) and the District of Columbia.
Calculated by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research.
**Chart 2.**
Overview of the Status of Women of Color in West Virginia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Participation</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>African American Women</th>
<th>Hispanic Women</th>
<th>Asian American Women</th>
<th>Native American Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Women in Elected Statewide Executive Office, 2004</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Women in U.S. Congress, 2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment and Earnings</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>African American Women</th>
<th>Hispanic Women</th>
<th>Asian American Women</th>
<th>Native American Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Annual Earnings (for full-time, year-round employed women), 1999 (in 2003 dollars)</td>
<td>$23,200</td>
<td>$24,900</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings Ratio Between Women and White Men, 1999</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Labor Force Participation, 2000</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Managerial and Professional Occupations, 2000</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Women with College Education (two- or four-year degree or higher), 2000</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 1999</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reproductive Health</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>African American Women</th>
<th>Hispanic Women</th>
<th>Asian American Women</th>
<th>Native American Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Mothers Beginning Prenatal Care in the First Trimester of Pregnancy, 2001</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Babies with Low Birth Weight, 2001</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health and Well-Being</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>African American Women</th>
<th>Hispanic Women</th>
<th>Asian American Women</th>
<th>Native American Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Heart Disease Mortality, per 100,000, 1999-2001</td>
<td>257.3</td>
<td>263.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Lung Cancer Mortality, per 100,000, 1999-2001</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Breast Cancer Mortality, per 100,000, 1999-2001</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
N/A = Not Available.
Hispanics may be of any race or two or more races. Racial categories (Whites, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans) do not include Hispanics.
See Appendix III of *The Status of Women in the States* for sources and a description of how race and ethnicity are defined for the economic data presented here.

Compiled by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research.

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For more information on IWPR reports or membership, please call (202) 785-5100 or e-mail iwpr@iwpr.org

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