



## Beijing +30 Shadow Reports

### *What Has Changed for US Women Since Beijing?*

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women established an ambitious roadmap for global gender equality, the Beijing Platform for Action, with multiple strategic objectives in twelve Areas of Concern. The US Women's Caucus has composed 12 Shadow Reports looking at progress for women and girls in the United States. Below are some highlights of the Shadow Reports, and the full series is available on our website: <https://www.uswomenscaucus.org/un-csw/csw-69-2025/>

#### **A. Women and Poverty**

**Women in the United States are 35 percent more likely than men to be poor, and single mothers face the highest risk.**

- 35 % of single women with children live and raise their families in poverty.<sup>1</sup>
- Achieving equal pay would reduce the poverty rate for working women from 8.0% to 3.8%.
- For working single mothers, equal pay would lower the poverty rate from 28.9% to 14.5%.<sup>2</sup>

#### **B. Education and Training of Women**

**Despite women's higher graduation rates, the gender wage gap persists at all educational levels.**

- Women of all races and ethnicities attend school and graduate at higher rates than their male peers. Even at the doctoral level, 54% of degrees in 2022 were conferred to women.<sup>3</sup>
- Paradoxically, the gender pay gap widens for women with more education. In 2022, the gender pay gap was 21.4% for high school graduates, 29.8% for college grads, and 30.2% for those with advanced degrees.

#### **C. Women and Health**

**Women in the US have unequal access to healthcare compared to men, with more illness and worse health outcomes.<sup>4</sup>**

- Uninsurance rates are higher among American Indian/Alaska Native (22%), Hispanic (21%), and Black (11%) women compared to White women (7%).<sup>5</sup>
- Black women are three times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than Whites (51 deaths vs. 15 deaths/100,000 live births).<sup>6</sup>

#### **D. Violence Against Women**

**Despite increased enforcement of the Violence Against Women Act, violence against women is still widespread.**

- More than four women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States each day.<sup>7</sup>
- Of the 4,970 women murdered in 2021 in the US, 34% were killed by an intimate partner.<sup>8</sup>
- Every month, an average of 70 women, more than 2 per day, are shot and killed by an intimate partner.<sup>9</sup>

#### **E. Women and Armed Conflict**

**The United States leads with the highest military spending in the world, and few women are at the peace table.**

- The US spent \$916 billion or 3.5% of GDP on military expenditures in 2023, over 40% of the total military spending worldwide.<sup>10</sup>
- Between 1992 and 2019, women averaged only 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 6% of signatories in major peace processes.<sup>11</sup>

#### **F. Women and the Economy**

**Gender discrimination in hiring leads to occupational segregation and the gender wage gap.**

- Only 52 women are promoted to technical manager positions for every 100 men in the US.<sup>12</sup>
- Women working full-time and year-round earn an average of 84 cents for every dollar a man earns in the US.<sup>13</sup>
- Black women earn 66 cents<sup>14</sup> and Indigenous women earn 59 cents compared to non-Hispanic white men.<sup>15</sup>

#### **G. Women in Power and Decision-Making**

**US women have advanced in business and government leadership, though no woman has become US president.**

- In 1995, fewer than 1% of Fortune 500 companies, the largest US companies, had female executives. By 2023, more than 10% were female, a steady improvement though far from equal.<sup>16</sup>
- Women held 25% of US Senate seats in 2024, up from 8% in 1995.<sup>17</sup> In the US House of Representatives, women held 125 seats, up from 47 in 1995.<sup>18</sup> In 1995, the US had one female governor, while in 2024, there were 12 female governors, including 8 Democrats and 4 Republicans.<sup>19</sup>

## H. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women.

**The US has established governmental bodies, passed legislation, and instituted policies to advance gender equality.**

- Four White House gender equality commissions and councils were formed, all under Democratic presidents.
- Only 13 US states have mandatory paid family and medical leave programs.
- Important federal legislative frameworks and laws include:
  - The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and its subsequent reauthorizations
  - The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009
  - The Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017

## I. Human Rights of Women

**The United States has created national action plans to advance women's human rights but has failed to ratify CEDAW or include the Equal Rights Amendment in the Constitution.**

- National action plans include the *National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* (2021) and the *National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* (2023).
- The United States backtracked on women's human rights with the US Supreme Court decision *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022), removing constitutional guarantees for women's reproductive healthcare.

## J. Women and the Media

**Women are under-represented in news media, television, and film production decision-making.**

- The top news editor positions in the US remain dominated by men, with 43% women and 57% men in 2024.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2022, women comprised 26% of directors, producers, writers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers working on original US films released by streaming services.<sup>21</sup>
- Female characters are often objectified and depicted wearing sexually revealing clothing.<sup>22</sup>

## K. Women and the Environment

**Women workers have few clean-energy jobs, especially women of color, and earn significantly less than men.**

- Women are only 25% of workers in the energy sector and 32% of the renewable energy workforce. Only 12.5% of apprenticeships are held by women in the US.<sup>23</sup>
- Latina, Black, and Indigenous women and girls comprise less than 10% of the STEM workforce.<sup>24</sup>

## L. The Girl-Child

**Girls have increased access to education and healthcare but face challenges such as child poverty and violence.**

- Women and girls from marginalized groups have less access to college-level STEM classes in high school and a lower level of attainment of STEM degrees than men.<sup>25</sup>
- Girls from age 16-19 are four times more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault compared to the general population, and 82% of all victims under 18 are women.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund n.d. *Women and Poverty in America*.

<sup>2</sup> Diversity Plus Magazine n.d. *Equal Pay Would Cut the Poverty Rate for Children with a Working Mother by Half*.

<sup>3</sup> Women in Academia Report 2023. *Gender Differences in Graduate Degree Awards*.

<sup>4</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation December 13, 2023. *Women's Health Insurance Coverage*.

<sup>5</sup> Hill, Latoya et al. 2024. *What are the Implications of the Dobbs Ruling for Racial Disparities?*

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Health Statistics 2024. *Provisional Maternal Mortality Rates*.

<sup>7</sup> Erica L. Smith December 2022. *Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021*. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>8</sup> Erica L. Smith December 2022. *Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021*. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>9</sup> Everytown for Gun Safety June 2024. *Guns and Violence Against Women*.

<sup>10</sup> Einar H. Dyvik 2024. *Countries with the Highest Military Spending 2023*.

<sup>11</sup> The White House 2023. *US Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security*. Pg. 8.

<sup>12</sup> McKinsey and Company March 1, 2022. *Repairing the Broken Rung on the Career Ladder for Women in Technical Roles*.

<sup>13</sup> President Joe Biden March 11, 2024. *National Equal Pay Day Proclamation 2024*.

<sup>14</sup> Equal Pay Today July 9, 2024. *Black Women's Equal Pay Day 2024*.

<sup>15</sup> National Women's Law Center March 5, 2024. *The Wage Gap by State for Native American Women*.

<sup>16</sup> Pew Research Center 2024. *Women CEOs in Fortune 500 Companies, 1995-2023*.

<sup>17</sup> United States Senate 2024. *Women Senators*.

<sup>18</sup> Center for American Women and Politics 2024. *Women in the US House of Representatives 2024*.

<sup>19</sup> Center for American Women and Politics 2024. *History of Women Governors*.

<sup>20</sup> *Women and Leadership in the News Media: Evidence from 12 Markets*. Reuters.

<sup>21</sup> Lauzen, M.M. 2022. *Streaming Women: Representation and Employment in Original U.S. Films Released by Streaming Services in 2022*. Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University.

<sup>22</sup> *GDI Film Study 2024: Women Take the Lead in \$20-\$50M Film*. Gena Davis Media Institute.

<sup>23</sup> Aimee Barnes et al. 2022. *Uplifting Women in the Clean Energy Economy*. Center for American Progress.

<sup>24</sup> National Girls Collaborative Project 2023. *The State of Girls and Women in STEM*.

<sup>25</sup> Ed Trust (2024). *Why STEM Equity Must Address the Experiences of Women of Color*.

<sup>26</sup> Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (2023). *RAINN Children and Teens: Statistics*.

**US feminists collaborating to advance human rights and gender equity for women and girls worldwide**

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