The WAGE GAP
The next Equal Pay Day is Tuesday, April 4, 2017. This date symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year.

Equal Pay Day was originated by the National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE) in 1996 as a public awareness event to illustrate the gap between men's and women's wages.

Because women earn less, on average, than men, they must work longer for the same amount of pay. The wage gap is even greater for most women of color.
2016 Calendar
What does this mean?

On average, women in the United States will have earned equal pay in comparison to men in 2016 on April 4th, 2017, three months and four days after the year ends.
How does the Wage Gap affect Women of Color?

From “The Lifetime Wage Gap By State for Women”, the lifetime losses for:

- Overall Women: $430,480
- African American: $877,480
- Asian-American: $365,440
- Latinas: $1,007,080
- Native-American: $883,040

The highest lifetime losses due to the wage gap effect Latina women in the District of Columbia, with $1,781,720 of losses.
**MYTH:** Saying women only earn 77 cents on the dollar is a huge exaggeration – the “real” pay gap is much smaller than that (if it even exists).

**FACT:** The size of the pay gap depends on how you measure it. The most common estimate is based on differences in annual earnings (currently about 23 cents difference per dollar). Another approach uses weekly earnings data (closer to an 18- or 19-cent difference). Analyzing the weekly figures can be more precise in certain ways, like accounting for work hours that vary over the course of the year, and less accurate in others, like certain forms of compensation that don’t get paid as weekly wages. No matter which number you start with, the differences in pay for women and men really add up. According to one analysis by the Department of Labor’s Chief Economist, a typical 25-year-old woman working full time would have already earned $5,000 less over the course of her working career than a typical 25-year-old man. If that earnings gap is not corrected, by age 65, she will have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars over her working lifetime. We also know that women earn less than men in every state and region of the country, and that once you factor in race, the pay gap for women of color is even larger.

**MYTH:** There is no such thing as the gender pay gap – legitimate differences between men and women cause the gap in pay, not discrimination.

**FACT:** Decades of research shows a gender gap in pay even after factors like the kind of work performed and qualifications (education and experience) are taken into account. These studies consistently conclude that discrimination is the best explanation of the remaining difference in pay. Economists generally attribute about 40% of the pay gap to discrimination – making about 60% explained by differences between workers or their jobs. However, even the “explained” differences between men and women might be more complicated. For example: If high school girls are discouraged from taking the math and science classes that lead to high-paying STEM jobs, shouldn’t we in some way count that as a lost equal earnings opportunity? As one commentator put it recently, “I don’t think that simply saying we have 9 cents of discrimination and then 14 cents of life choices is very satisfying.” In other words, no matter how you slice the data, pay discrimination is a real and persistent problem that continues to shortchange American women and their families.

MYTH: Women are responsible for the pay gap because they seek out flexible jobs or choose to work fewer hours. Putting family above work is why women earn less.

FACT: Putting aside whether it’s right to ask women (or men) to sacrifice financially in order to work and have a family, those kinds of choices aren’t enough to explain away the gender pay gap. The gender gap in pay exists for women working full time. Taking time off for children also doesn’t explain gaps at the start of a career. And although researchers have addressed various ways that work hours or schedule might or might not explain some portion of the wage gap, there may be a “motherhood penalty.” This is based on nothing more than the expectation that mothers will work less. Researchers have found that merely the status of being a mother can lead to perceptions of lowered competence and commitment and lower salary offers
The Motherhood Penalty

“As predicted, mothers were judged as significantly less competent and committed than women without children. The competence ratings are approximately 10% lower for mothers than for nonmothers, and the commitment ratings are about 15% lower. Mothers were also held to harsher performance and punctuality standards. Mothers were allowed significantly fewer times of being late to work, and they needed a significantly higher score on the management exam than nonmothers before being considered hirable. Similarly, the evaluation measures show significant and substantial penalties for motherhood. The recommended starting salary for mothers was $11,000 (7.4%) less than that offered to nonmothers, a significant difference. Mothers were also rated as significantly less promotable and were less likely to be recommended for management. Finally, while participants recommend 84% of female nonmothers for hire, they recommend a significantly lower 47% of mothers.”

Compared with white men, African American and Hispanic women make even less than white women:

- White Man: $1.00
- White Woman: 77¢
- African American Woman: 64¢
- Hispanic Woman: 56¢

Does the wage gap mean that women get to leave work 23% early today?