

WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE BEING SQUEEZED

With mounting job losses, stagnating wages, rising prices, and a collapsing housing market, most Americans are feeling the strains of a weak economy. For women, these problems are compounded by a continuing gender gap in pay. Now more than ever we need for a new direction in economic policy, aimed at restoring broad-based growth, reducing the high costs of energy and health care, improving retirement security, and increasing prosperity for all Americans.

Female-Headed Families Are Being Squeezed By Rising Expenses. Median income among female-headed families is lower than median family income overall, so rising costs eat up a larger share of their family budgets. Between 2000 and 2007, female-headed families saw their median income fall by 5.4 percent, to \$24,949, a loss of \$1,437.* Since 2000, the average price of gasoline has increased 145 percent to \$4.06 per gallon, the average family health insurance premium has jumped 41 percent to \$11,765, and the average cost of child care for two children is now \$1,041 per month. [U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, available [here](#); Energy Information Administration, available [here](#); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, available [here](#); National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, available [here](#).]

Wage Growth Has Stalled For Female Workers. During the 2000s economic recovery, women's inflation-adjusted wages rose at an annual rate of 0.7 percent, after having grown nearly twice as much (1.2 percent) per year during the 1990s recovery. For all workers, inflation-adjusted wages grew by 0.3 percent annually, far less than productivity, which grew by 2.6 percent per year. Today, women earn 78 cents to every dollar a man earns. [Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, available [here](#); Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, available [here](#); and JEC analysis.]

Women Are Now Losing Jobs. After years of lackluster employment gains, the economy is now shedding jobs: female workers have lost 298,000 jobs since December 2007. Female unemployment rose from 4.1 percent in 2000 to 5.2 percent in 2008 and there are now 3.8 million unemployed women—1.0 million more than when President Bush took office. Women's job losses hurt families: nearly three-quarters of all children are raised in families without a stay-at-home parent, and in married-couple families working wives bring home over a third of their family's total income. [Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, available [here](#).]

The Subprime Mortgage Crisis Is Impacting Female Homeowners. On the Bush Administration's watch, unregulated mortgage originators were given financial incentives to sell risky, unaffordable subprime mortgages to vulnerable borrowers. Evidence suggests that those lenders targeted minority, elderly and female borrowers. During the subprime boom—despite having higher credit scores on average—female home-buyers were 32 percent more likely than males to receive a high cost subprime mortgage loan. The Joint Economic Committee estimates the number of U.S. subprime foreclosures will total 2 million by the end of 2009; a disproportionate share will likely be women homeowners. [Consumer Federation of America, available [here](#); JEC April 2008 Impact of Subprime Foreclosures report, available [here](#).]

Over One-in-Three Female-Headed Families Was Living in Poverty in 2007. Nationwide, 3.6 million female-headed families (37.0 percent) were living in poverty in 2007, up from 33.0 percent in 2000. Two-fifths (43.0 percent) of children living in female-headed households were living below the poverty line, three and one-half times the total national poverty rate of 12.5 percent. There are 1.2 million more poor children in female-headed families than there were in 2000. [Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, available [here](#).]

Nearly One-Fifth of Women Have No Health Insurance. In 2007, 16.7 million (17.6 percent) of women (aged 18 to 64) had no health insurance. Across the country, the number of all Americans without health insurance totals 45.7 million (15.3 percent of the population), up 7.2 million since 2000. [Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, available [here](#).]

* All dollar values (except gas prices, which are current) are in 2007 CPI-U-RS adjusted dollars.