



Facts on Women Workers

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AUGUST 31, 1947

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN JULY 1947

The woman labor force in July 1947 was 400,000 greater than in July 1946. The increase was not far from the normal amount expected as a result of the growth in the population of working age. There were nearly 300,000 more women unemployed than in July 1946, while the number employed had risen by about 100,000.

	July 1947			
	Number of women	Change since June 1947	Total persons Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	54,561,000	+ 55,000	107,504,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	17,803,000	- 346,000	62,664,000	28.4
Employed	17,008,000	- 294,000	60,079,000	28.3
Unemployed	795,000	- 53,000	2,584,000	30.8
Armed forces	19,000	No change	1,371,000	1.4
Nonworkers	36,739,000	+ 402,000	43,469,000	84.5

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

A Federal equal pay bill, HR 4273, was introduced by Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas (Dem.) on July 18. The bill contains the same provisions as does S. 1556 introduced by Senators Pepper (Dem.) and Morse (Rep.) on July 2 (See July Fact Sheet). Rep. Margaret Chase Smith (Rep.) also introduced an equal pay bill, HR 4408, on July 26. The recent action by Representatives Douglas and Smith gives equal pay legislation bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress.

MINIMUM WAGE

The Utah retail trade order has been revised, effective September 1, 1947. It increases the minimum basic rate for a workweek of 40-48 hours from \$20 to \$23 per week in the 2 largest cities and sets up 4 geographical zones with varying rates. Increases over previous rates of \$3 per week in 2 zones and of \$4 in 1 zone are provided.

COST OF LIVING

Cost of living figures of 2 minimum wage States have been revised to bring them in line with December 1946 prices. Both States base food and housing costs on a furnished room and meals eaten in restaurants. It was estimated that the minimum average annual cost of adequate maintenance for a self-supporting, employed woman was \$1,965 in Pennsylvania; \$2,163 in New Jersey. Both of these figures include allowances for taxes, insurance, and savings. The cost of commodities and services alone was \$1,611 and \$1,747 respectively in these two States. This represents an increase of 57 percent in the commodity and service items in the former State and 62 percent in the latter since 1938 when the budgets were originally priced.

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MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN WORKERS

Unpublished Census estimates for June 1946 show that of all single women in the population of working age 56.3 percent were workers, compared with 34.8 percent of the widowed or divorced, and 22.7 percent of the married.

Among all women in the population of working age over 60 percent were married, while less than one-fourth were single. Of women in the labor force 44.3 percent were married, 40.2 percent were single, and 15.5 percent were widowed or divorced.

Previous data are not entirely comparable with these figures. Comparisons with improved census enumeration techniques in use since 1945 indicate that previous unrevised labor force data probably understate somewhat the proportion of married women in the labor force. In addition the estimates for 1946, which relate to June, include a large number of seasonal agricultural workers, whereas the data for previous years relate to earlier months, generally March or April, and were not affected by seasonal factors to the same extent. After allowance is made for these differences, it is likely that married women workers in the postwar period are somewhat less important proportionally than during the war (1944), but they are significantly more prominent relative to both population and labor force than in 1940.

The growing importance of married women workers continues a long-time trend in our industrial economy, in which money income has increasingly determined the family's standard of living. In addition there are available for the production of goods and services, more married women and fewer single women in the population than in the prewar period.

ILO NIGHT WORK CONVENTIONS

The Governing Body of the International Labor Organization is now making a decennial study and report of the operation of the two night-work conventions for women: No. 4, adopted in 1919, and No. 41, adopted in 1934. Convention No. 4 provides for the prohibition, with some exceptions, of the employment of women in "industrial undertakings" during a period of 11 or more consecutive hours including the interval between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Convention No. 41 differs from No. 4 on one major point only: It exempts women holding responsible positions of management. As of April 1, 1947, these countries had ratified one or both conventions: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentine Republic, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Nicaragua, Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Rumania, Spain, Switzerland, Union of South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Burma, Iraq, and New Zealand. Most of the countries ratifying the conventions have enacted legislation carrying them into effect. Such legislation, although it varies from one country to another in details, conforms substantially with the terms of the conventions. The laws and regulations of all ratifying countries cover women of all age groups; a few provide stricter regulation for girls under 21.

- HAVE Economic Status of Nurses. in MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW, July 1947.
YOU You Are Losing Ground, by Alice Fraser. in McCALL'S, August 1947.
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES TO WOMEN. U. S. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 212.
READ MATERNITY BENEFITS UNDER UNION-CONTRACT HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS.
U. S. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 214.