

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
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MAURICE J. TOBIN, Secretary



# Facts on Women Workers

Frieda S. Miller, Director, WOMEN'S BUREAU

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## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN MARCH 1949

Employment of women in March 1949 has increased since February by some 200,000 women and unemployment has declined, according to Census reports.

	Number of women	Change since February 1949	March 1949	
			Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	55,560,000	+ 54,000	109,290,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	17,289,000	+ 130,000	60,814,000	28.4
Employed	16,555,000	+ 199,000	57,647,000	28.7
Unemployed	734,000	- 70,000	3,167,000	23.2
Armed forces	16,000	No change	1,491,000	1.1
Nonworkers	38,255,000	- 75,000	46,985,000	81.4

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

During the past 12 months the employment picture for women has been fairly stable. From 31 to 34 percent of all women 14 years of age and over have been in the labor force, the larger percent being in the months when agricultural employment is seasonally high. Women have been about 28 or 29 percent of all persons in the labor force in every month. Unemployment of women has ranged from 3 percent to 4.7 percent of all women in the labor force; the numbers unemployed are now somewhat above the same period last year.

## MINIMUM WAGE

Washington State plans to revise several additional minimum-wage orders. A public hearing was scheduled for the mercantile industry on April 4 and for occupations in the amusement and recreational field on April 18.

## COST OF LIVING

As of January 1949 the cost of the goods and services allowed in Colorado's budget for an employed woman was estimated at \$1,581. Savings and taxes required \$232 additional, bringing the total cost of the budget to \$1,813.

The budget list on which the money amount is based, like all those developed for use in minimum-wage administration, provides only the minimum of the essential things that are necessary to maintain a working woman in health. While theoretically such a budget allows conformity to a consumption pattern which permits acceptance by her group, it provides for none of the semiluxury items which may be considered more or less commonplace among women wage earners today.

## EQUAL PAY

Alaska has passed an equal-pay law, effective on May 7, 1949. It is the tenth jurisdiction to establish equal pay by law. The law provides that "no employer . . . shall employ any female in any occupation . . . at salary or wage rates less than the rates paid to male employees for work of comparable character or work in same operations, business or type of work in the same locality."

## JURY SERVICE - Wyoming

Wyoming has passed a bill, signed by the Governor, which extends compulsory jury service to women. This leaves 12 States in which women are barred from jury duty.

## FEDERAL LEGISLATION

### Status Bill

The Women's Status Bill which proposes to establish a commission on the legal status of women to study and report on discriminations practiced against them has gained bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. Representative Wadsworth, Republican from New York, recently introduced H.R. 2670. This brings the number of identical status bills in the House up to five in number. The others are H.R. 2396 (Douglas), H.R. 2693 (Burke), H.R. 2754 (Young), and H.R. 2840 (Norton). Senator Morse was among the sponsors of S. 1430 which was introduced in the Senate on March 28th. Other sponsors are Senators Kefauver, Wagner, Murray, Johnson of Colorado, and Chavez.

### Social Security

Miss Frieda S. Miller, Director of the Women's Bureau, testified before the House Ways and Means Committee on April 6 in support of certain amendments to the Social Security Act which have been proposed in H.R. 2893 introduced by Rep. Doughton.

The three specific subjects of emphasis which the Women's Bureau supported were: (1) coverage of certain additional groups of workers where large numbers of women are involved (household and agricultural workers, self-employed persons, and employees of non-profit institutions such as religious, charitable, or educational); (2) inclusion of maternity benefits for employed women among the proposed provisions for disability benefits; and (3) establishment of lower pension age (60 years) for wives and widows of insured individuals and also for women who, as insured individuals, may wish to retire at an earlier age than the present 65-year minimum.

## WORKING MOTHERS

About 1½ million women in the labor force in April 1948 had children under 6, according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census, and 2½ million had children from 6 to 18 but no younger children. About three-fourths of all these working mothers with children under 18 lived in normal families, i.e., with husband present, and about a fourth (approximately 1 million) in families where the husband is not present in the home (employed in other places, in institutions, separated, deceased, or absent for other reasons).

Generally the presence of young children tends to prevent mothers from holding jobs. In normal families, with husband present, a little over a tenth of the mothers with children under 6 years of age were in the labor force, compared with 26 percent of the wives with children over 6 but under 18, and 28 percent where there were no children.

The proportion of mothers who work was far greater where the husbands were absent from home. About half (45 percent) of these mothers with children under 6 years were in the labor force, and nearly two-thirds of those having only school-age children between 6 and 18 years.

## WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL AND SEMIPROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

By 1949 the number of women in professional and semiprofessional occupations was slightly above 1940 (by 14,000), but women constituted only 40 percent of all workers in this occupational group in 1949, as compared to 45 percent in 1940, according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census. Moreover, the proportion which the professional and semiprofessional group of women comprised of all women workers had declined from 13 percent in 1940 to 10 percent in 1949.

During the war not only had the actual number of women in professional and semiprofessional occupations declined, but the proportion women formed of the total in these occupations decreased. (This decline is largely attributed to the entry into war plants or essential civilian services of large numbers from professional and semiprofessional groups, especially teachers. The demand for young persons in clerical and manufacturing industries also drew off women who would normally go on with professional training in such fields as teaching, social work, library work, dietetics, home economics.)

## WOMEN SERVING IN STATE LEGISLATURES

A total of 217 women are now serving in the 1949 State Legislatures, according to the latest reports — 17 in the State senates and 200 in State assemblies. All were elected except one woman appointed to fill an unexpired term of a man, deceased.

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women completed its third session, which took place at Beirut, Lebanon, on April 4, 1949. Major interest centered on the U. S. proposal for a convention on the nationality of married women. The Commission also took action on the world-wide shortage of health workers, particularly nurses; the denial of equal suffrage to women which still exists in some twenty countries; and equal pay for women, encouraging further action through the I.L.O.

In line with earlier resolutions urging equal recognition of women in public office, the Commission requested a report from the Secretary General on the extent to which women are being appointed to key posts in the UN Secretariat and on the delegations of member governments to UN bodies.

Plans were made with UNESCO for further work on discriminations against women in regard to educational and professional opportunities.

EXCHANGE PROGRAM - Women Leaders

A new program - started in April, provides an opportunity for women leaders of Latin American countries to study and observe the educational, civic, and social programs of women's organizations and the role of women in the United States as citizens, workers, and home-makers. The program is sponsored by the Women's Bureau (as part of the international program of the U. S. Department of Labor) in cooperation with the U. S. Department of State under the International Exchange of Persons' program and nine national women's organizations: National Council of Jewish Women, National Council of Catholic Women, American Association of University Women, General Federation of Women's Clubs, National Women's Trade Union League, National Board of YWCA, National League of Women Voters, National Council of Negro Women, National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

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**THE GIFT OF FREEDOM - A Study of the Economic and Social Status of Wage Earners in the United States**, published by the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (The book is designed to tell the worker in foreign countries "how his American counterpart lives.") May be obtained only from Supt. of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. 55 cents a single copy.

**MOVEMENT FOR EQUAL PAY LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES (Multilith)**  
Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

**YOUR JOB FUTURE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL (Leaflet)**  
Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.