

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MARYLAND: HIGHLIGHTS

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) has prepared a report on the *Status of Women in Maryland* to inform Maryland residents about the progress of women in Maryland relative to women in other states, to men, and to national trends. In addition to this report, IWPR staff have produced reports on 12 other states and the District of Columbia as well as a national report that summarizes key findings for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In each report, various indicators describe the status of women in four important areas: political participation, employment and earnings, economic autonomy, and reproductive rights. Basic health and demographic data are also provided. On each of the four aspects of women's well-being for which IWPR calculated composite indicators, Maryland ranks in the top ten. Maryland is part of the South Atlantic region (which also includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia in addition to Maryland), a region in which women generally fare poorly when compared with women in the rest of the nation. Maryland is one exception to this trend and ranks second or third in the nation on three of the four composite indices.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Ranks

The composite political participation rank is based on women's voter registration and turnout, women elected officials at the state and federal levels, and women's institutional resources in the state (such as a state commission for women). The national rank is of a possible 50, because the District of Columbia is not included in this ranking. The regional rank is of a maximum of eight and refers to the states in the South Atlantic region; it also does not include the District of Columbia.

- Maryland ranks fifth in the nation and first in the South Atlantic region on the political participation composite indicator.
- Maryland ranks first in the nation for women's institutional resources. Maryland has a government-appointed Commission on the Status of Women as well as a nongovernmental state agenda project that calls attention to women's issues. In the state General Assembly, a legislative caucus for women's issues exists, consisting of members from both the House and the Senate.
- Maryland's lowest political participation indicator is women's voter registration, on which it ranks 27th in the nation.

Facts and Figures

- Fifty-four of the 188 seats in Maryland's state legislature were filled by women as of April 1996, placing Maryland eighth among all states in terms of the percentage of women in the state legislature. One of Maryland's two U.S. Senators is a woman (Senator Barbara Mikulski) as is one of Maryland's eight U.S. Representatives (Representative Constance Morella).
- Since 1964, female voters in the United States have outnumbered male voters, but voter turnout is relatively low for both sexes by international standards. Sixty-nine percent of eligible women and 63 percent of eligible men in Maryland reported that they voted in the November 1992 election.

Chart I. How Maryland Ranks on Key Indicators

	National Rank*	Regional Rank*
COMPOSITE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION INDEX	5	1
Women's Voter Registration, 1992-1994	27	1
Women's Voter Turnout, 1992-1994	22	1
Women in Elected Office Composite, 1996	7	2
Women's Institutional Resources, 1996	1	1
COMPOSITE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS INDEX	3	2
Women's Median Annual Earnings, 1990	5	2
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings, 1990	12	4
Women's Labor Force Participation, 1994	12	1
Women in Managerial and Professional Occupations, 1994	2	2
COMPOSITE ECONOMIC AUTONOMY INDEX	2	2
Percent with Health Insurance Among Nonelderly Women, 1991-1992	14	1
Educational Attainment: Percent of Women with Four or More Years of College, 1990	6	2
Women's Business Ownership, 1992	6	2
Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 1990	6	1
COMPOSITE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS INDEX	3	1
<i>See Appendix I of The Status of Women in the States, available from IWPR, for a detailed description of the methodology and sources used for the indices presented here.</i>		
<i>* The national rankings are of a possible 51, referring to the 50 states and the District of Columbia, except for the political participation indicators, which do not include the District of Columbia. The regional rankings are of a maximum of nine and refer to the states in the South Atlantic region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia), except for the regional rankings for political participation, which are of eight and exclude the District of Columbia.</i>		

Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Ranks

The composite employment and earnings rank is based on women's median annual earnings, the female/male earnings ratio, women's labor force participation, and the proportion of working women in professional and managerial positions. The national rank is of a possible 51, referring to the 50 states plus the District of Columbia. The regional rank is of a maximum of nine and refers to the states in the South Atlantic region, including the District of Columbia.

- Maryland ranks third in the nation and second in its region on the employment and earnings composite indicator.
- Maryland ranks second in the nation and in its region in terms of the percent of working women in professional and managerial occupations.

Facts and Figures

- Compared with the nation as a whole, Maryland women enjoy slightly greater earnings equality with men. In 1990, the ratio of the median annual earnings of women to those of men for full-time, year-round workers aged 18 to 65 was 68.5 percent in the United States and 71.0 percent in Maryland.
- The female unemployment rate in Maryland is the lowest in the South Atlantic region and the 10th lowest in the nation. In 1994, the unemployment rate for women in Maryland was 4.5 percent compared with the nation's 6.0 percent female unemployment rate.

ECONOMIC AUTONOMY

Ranks

The composite economic autonomy rank is based on women's access to health insurance, women's educational attainment, women's business ownership, and the proportion of women living above poverty.

- Maryland ranks second in the nation and in its region on the economic autonomy composite indicator.
- Maryland ranks 14th in the nation and first in its region in terms of the percentage of nonelderly women with access to health insurance.

Facts and Figures

- The proportion of women in poverty in Maryland is much lower than that of women in the United States (8.8 percent compared with 13.2 percent), yet the poverty rate is still much higher for single mothers than for any other family type.
- The business receipts of women-owned businesses in Maryland rose by 67 percent in constant dollars between 1987 and 1992. This is compared with an increase of 87 percent in business receipts for women-owned firms nationally and 35 percent for all firms in the United States during this time period, also adjusted for inflation.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Ranks

The composite reproductive rights rank is based on information on legislation relating to access to legal abortions, the availability of public funding for abortions and infertility treatments, the position of the governor and state legislature on reproductive choice, maternity stay laws, and legislation regarding adoption by lesbian and gay couples.

- Maryland ranks third in the nation and first in its region on the reproductive rights composite indicator.

Facts and Figures

- Fifty percent of counties in Maryland have abortion providers, a fairly high proportion when compared with the rest of the nation (16 percent).
- Mandatory consent laws require that minors notify or gain the consent of one or both parents before a physician can perform an abortion. As of January 1995, Maryland was one of 35 states that require parental notification (unless a physician waives the requirement) and one of 24 states that enforce their mandatory consent laws.

HEALTH AND VITAL STATISTICS

- Compared with the nation as a whole, Maryland has a higher infant mortality rate (deaths of infants under age one per 1,000 live births), a lower fertility rate (live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44), and a similar percent of low birth weight babies.
- The percentage of the population enrolled in HMOs in Maryland is nearly twice as high as in the United States as a whole (36.2 percent compared with 19.5 percent). While Medicare recipients in Maryland are less likely than those nationwide to be enrolled in an HMO, Medicaid recipients in Maryland are much more likely to be HMO members than those nationwide.

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

- Compared with the nation as a whole, Maryland has a relatively small female elderly population, a high proportion of single women, and more women living in metropolitan areas.
- The female population in Maryland is more ethnically diverse than in the nation as a whole, with minority women making up about 31 percent of women in Maryland compared with 24 percent of women in the United States as a whole.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is an independent, non-profit, scientific research organization founded in 1987 to meet the need for women-centered, policy-oriented research. This Research-in-Brief is based on the report The Status of Women in Maryland, part of a larger research project funded by the Ford Foundation. The data used in the report come from a variety of sources, primarily government agencies, and individuals and organizations in Maryland assisted in reviewing the report. The Advisory Committee for the report in Maryland is chaired by Joanne M. Saltzberg, Maryland Commission for Women, and includes: Gloria Goldfaden, People Against Child Abuse, Inc.; Verna Kushel, National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland; Sherri Wynn, Maryland Women's Political Caucus; Celeste Williams, Maryland State Teachers Association Women's Caucus; Marcy Canavan, Maryland Education Coalition; Sol de Ande Eaton, Prince George's County Commission for Women; Carol Alexander, House of Ruth; Christine Davenport, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Glen Burnie; Jana Singer, Women's Law Center; Louise Lynch, Frederick County Commission for Women; Connie Devilbliss, Frederick County Commission for Women; Phyllis B. Martin, Hartford County Commission for Women; Annette Drummond, Arm-In-Arm; Anne Thompson, American College of Nurse-Midwives, Maryland; Joanne Tuolonen, Maryland Alliance Against Family Violence; Lori Rogvin, Maryland Committee for Children; Khadeeja Fatou Mata, National Caucus on the Black Angel; Carol Payne, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, Maryland Coalition; and June White Dillard, Black Women's Bar Association.

This Research-in-Brief was written by Stacey Friedman and prepared by Megan DeBell in March 1997. The full report, The Status of Women in Maryland, is available for \$10.00 from the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Members and affiliates of the Institute's Information Network receive regular reports and information. For a copy of the full report or more information on membership, please contact IWPR at 1400 20th Street N.W., Suite 104, Washington, D.C. 20036, phone 202/785-5100, fax 202/833-4362 or visit our web site at <http://www.iwpr.org>.

In Maryland, for copies of the report, contact the Maryland Commission for Women, 311 West Saratoga Street, Room 232, Baltimore, MD 21201, phone 410/767-7556, fax 410/333-0392.