Rockefeller Foundation Hosts Release of IWPR Report on Economic Insecurity

Vicky Lovell and Claudia Williams

A new IWPR report, Women at Greater Risk of Economic Insecurity: a Gender Analysis of the Rockefeller Foundation’s American Worker Survey, explores Americans’ concerns about economic issues that affect the lives of women, men, and their families across the lifespan. Written by Dr. Vicky Lovell, IWPR Acting Director of Research, Dr. Heidi Hartmann, IWPR President, and Claudia Williams, IWPR Research Assistant, the report was released May 8 at a press conference at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York City.

The IWPR study shows that women are more financially vulnerable than men on a range of measures. Twelve percent of mothers, compared with 6 percent of fathers, have lacked sufficient

IWPR Research Informs State Initiatives in California and Minnesota

Jill Hindenaeh

IWPR works in partnership with local and state women’s advocacy groups and other public interest organizations to produce and disseminate research that advances policy to benefit women and girls. This year, along with reports on the economic status of women in Georgia and South Carolina (see Winter 2008 Newsletter) and research on women in Louisiana and Mississippi (see page 5), the Institute released reports addressing the needs of workers in California and the status of girls in Minnesota.

Valuing Good Health in California

On April 9, Dr. Vicky Lovell, IWPR Acting Director of Research, traveled to Sacramento, California, to release IWPR’s study of a proposed minimum standard for paid sick days for workers in California. Valuing Good Health in California: The Costs and Benefits of the Healthy Workplaces Act of 2008 was highlighted at a press conference hosted by the bill’s sponsor, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, at the State Capitol. Dr. Lovell also appeared as an expert before the California Assembly.

Currently, 5.4 million workers in California are without paid sick leave—42 percent of the private-sector and local government workforce outside of San Francisco. IWPR’s report evaluates the likely impact of allowing them to take time off work with pay when they are sick or to care for sick family members, or to access services related to domestic violence. It is part of a series of such analyses conducted by the Institute, including Valuing Good Health in San Francisco, a report that informed lawmakers on the paid sick days policy approved in Novem-

(cont’d on p. 3)
Lately I’m viscerally aware of how the struggles of work-life balance take different forms at different stages of our lives. Heidi Hartmann is on a long- overdue six-month sabbatical after nurturing IWPR through its first twenty years, while raising three children, and spending the last year helping her 90-year-old mom move from New Jersey to a retirement community in the Washington DC area. She’s using the time to study how to make our social security system more equitable for low-income women and to get some relief from the daily management grind.

My challenges with balance shifted from shaking the addiction of being “married to my job” in my mid-thirties (how many times did my sister call to ask, gee, do you ALWAYS work until 10:00 on Saturday nights?), to experiencing life as a full-time working mom with a twenty-month-old daughter. Now, surprising to me as it is, the pull to get home is as strong as the pull to stay at work, and I feel stretched and conflicted.

Yes, I’d heard about what it was going to be like, but it’s one of those things that you never really know until you experience it, and for some silly reason I thought it might be different for me.

But perhaps most striking of all is the struggle with balance that appeared in IWPR’s recent report on the Status of Girls in Minnesota, and that is also evident in our forthcoming study on the Status of Black Girls in New York City. Our Minnesota study found that not only do teen and pre-teen girls spend more time than boys studying, more time working for pay, and more time volunteering, they also spend more time doing chores around the house and helping with child care. And low-income girls of color are especially likely to spend substantial time doing housework and child care. The boys in the sample, on the other hand, spent more time playing video games and “just hanging out.”

So right around puberty our young girls are already falling into their stereotyped caring roles and struggling with work/life balance before they’ve made it through high school. African American and Native American girls, especially, shoulder heavy family responsibilities at the same time that they face especially poor economic prospects. How would their chances improve if we had a fully functioning system of affordable, accessible, child care? What are the costs to young adults when their parents lack the basic work supports such as paid sick days that many would argue are a core responsibility of government and the private sector? This suggests to me that the benefits of quality early childhood programs, already well-documented for the kids who participate in them, and for society by extension, also apply to the young adults who often have to fill in when their parents are at work.

A recent series of reports by Janet Gornick and colleagues (one of which was recently co-authored by IWPR Scholar-in-Residence Ariane Hegewisch) explores the policy approaches that other high-income countries use to give workers the support and flexibility they need to thrive in their many roles. These European countries have a lot to teach the United States about building a strong workforce by promoting work-life balance. Can we begin to catch up to most other developed nations, such as France, Sweden, and Finland, and begin thinking of child care as a public good?

As we anticipate the change in the presidential administration and the new opportunities it will bring, it is an excellent time to start dreaming of a nation that values caregiving and understands that our economy is measured not just by GDP, but by the contributions that nurture children, adolescents, older Americans, and our friends and neighbors. Looking toward January, IWPR is working hard to envision how our research findings might inform transformative new policies to benefit girls of color, immigrant women, low-income women who dream of achieving a postsecondary degree, and all of us who struggle to maintain balance every day.

In collaboration with the Wellesley Centers for Women, we are preparing a series of papers on key challenges facing women over the next several decades, and innovative policy approaches to address them. We hope to release these papers in the first half of next year. Please consider giving a call or sending an email to share your thoughts about new policy directions for early in 2009 and beyond. Let’s come together to work for big change, better balance, and brighter futures for all girls.

Heidi Hartmann is on sabbatical through November, 2008.

Barbara Gault
Economic Insecurity
(cont’d from p.1)

income to take a child to the doctor. Racial/
ethnic background is strongly related to eco-
nomic well-being and anxiety levels among
women. African American women and Lati-
nas experience much more economic anxiety
than white women and are more likely to have
insufficient income. Twenty percent of Afri-
can American women and 23 percent of Lati-
nas sometimes have too little money to put
food on their tables, but only 10 percent of
white women report being in that situation.

Similarly, 32 percent of African American
women and 34 percent of Hispanic women
worry about how they will get out of debt,
compared with 19 percent of white women.
But women in these groups share common
distress about the possibility of cutbacks to
the Social Security program or being able
to pay out-of-pocket health care expenses:
Fifty-five percent of white women and 58
percent of minority women worry about the
Social Security program being cut back,
and 63 percent of both white and minority
women worry about being able to pay out-
of-pocket health-care expenses.

Many American Workers Survey respondents
reported not saving enough for retirement,
but for women this was one of the top eco-
nomic concerns. Most women say they cannot
save more—fewer women than men can par-
ticipate in a retirement savings plan through
their jobs—and rely primarily on social secu-
rity for their retirement. Women also worry
about their current and retirement financial
situation no matter how well-educated or
how wealthy they are. The study also found
that women are more likely to prefer having a
job that guarantees health coverage and pen-
sion over a higher-wage job, while men were
more likely to prefer higher current income.

The report provides a snapshot of the im-
portant diversity of women’s economic reali-
ties. It also points out policy solutions for im-
proving economic security and meeting basic
needs among vulnerable women and men.

At the event, Dr. Hartmann spoke about
why the policy world needs gender-focused
non-partisan research. Dr. Barbara Gault,
IWPR Acting President, highlighted the
connection between the report’s findings
and policies such as expanded child care,
enhanced educational opportunities, and
pay equity that could reduce women’s eco-
nomic insecurity. Dr. Lovell addressed the
survey’s findings on both diversity and
similarity of economic concerns among
groups of women.

Among the attendees were grantmak-
ers, researchers, representatives of groups
dedicated to advancing women in business
and other arenas, and journalists. The event
ended with a broad-ranging discussion of
the need for data disaggregated by gender to
inform public policy.

The project was funded by the Rockefeller
Foundation as a part of its American Work-
ers Initiative. It applied a gender lens to data
from the American Workers Survey, which was
conducted for Rockefeller by Yankelovich,

Hartmann Testifies before the Joint Economic Committee

On June 6, Dr. Heidi Hartmann, IWPR President, testified before the United States Congress’ Joint Economic Committee at a hearing on
testimony focused on the current economic downturn and its impact on women.

View this and other new IWPR reports
at www.iwpr.org. See page 9 for a
list of other new releases from IWPR!

Dr. Hartmann testifies before Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee hearing.
State Initiatives
(cont’d from p.1)

Valuing Good Health in California shows the program cost to be $1.3 billion a year. Savings are estimated at $2.3 billion annually, when reduced turnover, decreased spread of disease at work, and other benefits are factored in.

If signed into law, the Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Act would make California the first state in the nation to require employers to provide paid sick days to all workers.

Status of Girls in Minnesota

The Institute’s new study Status of Girls in Minnesota was released at the State Capitol in St. Paul on April 28. The Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, which commissioned the research, hosted the event, with Erica Williams, IWPR Study Director and report author, presenting IWPR’s findings. Other speakers included Lee Roper-Batker, President and CEO of the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, Sandra Vargas, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation, and Rep. Neva Walker, Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party of Minneapolis.

The report presents an in-depth examination of the economic, social, physical, and psychological well-being of girls in the state. It shows that while girls in Minnesota are doing well overall, girls of color in the state fare poorly on a number of indicators. In fact, in the areas of poverty and teen pregnancy, girls of color in Minnesota fare worse than their national counterparts, whereas white girls in the state fare better than white girls nationally.

More than 43 percent of Minnesota’s African-American girls, nearly 42 percent of American Indian girls, and 27 percent of Hispanic girls are poor, compared with only seven percent of white girls. And despite working hard and being high achievers on a number of indicators, including studying more, getting better grades than boys, and helping their families with child care or working more for pay, Minnesota’s girls have lower levels of self-esteem than boys within every racial and ethnic group and at each grade level.

The release of the report kicked off the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota’s Road to Equality Tour. The Foundation is traveling to 15 Minnesota communities, holding public meetings to introduce the research and conducting focus groups with community, business, and political leaders. Information gathered in these conversations will contribute to a new report of public policy recommendations related to the women and girls of Minnesota.

Linking Economic Development and Child Care Venture Grantees Annual Conference

This spring, IWPR co-hosted the annual conference of the Linking Economic Development and Child Care Venture Grantees in North Carolina with Cornell University, the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance, and the Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center. The conference focused on the exchange of innovative state and community strategies to strengthen the child care sector.

Attendees included Dr. Mildred Warner, Cornell University, (left) and Ana Berdecia, Co-Chair of the New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council.
IWPR Releases Third Report on Women of the Gulf Coast

Angela Carlberg

IWPR released Women in the Wake of the Storm: Examining the Post-Katrina Realities of the Women of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast at the 2008 Summit on Economic Justice for Women in Atlanta, Georgia on April 11. The report, authored by IWPR Affiliated Scholar Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, is the third in an IWPR series that examines the experiences of women, particularly those of color, in the areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The research was funded by Soroptimist International of the Americas and the Ms. Foundation.

Dr. Jones-DeWeever interviewed 38 Hurricane Katrina survivors ranging in age from 19 to 66. The women represent Black, White, Latina, and Creole communities. Each woman recounted her story as an activist, volunteer, organizer, or public service provider, and these women reflected on the strategies they adopted to endure the disaster of the hurricanes and their aftermath.

One woman described how rescuers tried to separate women from their children for transport. When her protests led to her being left behind with her son, they sought shelter with others under an overpass. This was not a safe location, however; she observed women being sexually assaulted. And violence against women continues. A counselor confirmed that assaults have increased since the storm as women and families remain confined to cramped and stressful conditions.

Even before the water abated, the remnants of the storm uncovered the racial, class, and gendered discrimination that confronted the majority of those affected by the storm. Affordable housing and accessible health care were largely unobtainable for those hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina even before the hurricanes hit. Now, women’s stories collected in this study show how difficult it is to access the services necessary for survival and recovery, particularly for women-headed families and poorer families of color.

Women in the Wake of the Storm includes policy recommendations for increasing the supply of housing and health care and emphasizes the need to include women in the planning and rebuilding processes through political involvement and nontraditional job training.

Gender Wage Ratio Gradually Increasing

IWPR’s updated Gender Wage Ratio fact sheet shows that the ratio between women’s and men’s earnings is gradually increasing (it is now 80.2, for weekly earnings), but in recent years the ratio of annual earnings has increased only because women’s earnings are not falling as fast as men’s. IWPR revises its wage gap fact sheet twice a year when new data become available.

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Angela Carlberg and Elisabeth Crum

An inspiring and diverse mix of grassroots activists, researchers, and community leaders came together at the 2008 Summit on Economic Justice for Women in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 11 and 12. The summit was convened by the National Organization for Women Foundation (NOW), the Institute for Women's Policy Research, and the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). It juxtaposed research findings with the experiences of advocates, service providers, and workers, offering women's rights champions new information and providing context for research projects.

More than 120 panelists assembled to present 36 workshops and roundtables. The topics included effective child care systems in the United States and other nations, economic development strategies for supporting single mothers, organizing domestic workers, women and HIV, building support for paid sick days, micro-enterprise as an economic empowerment strategy, the continuing challenges of Hurricane Katrina survivors, the targeting of women and people of color by subprime housing lenders, and reforming the U.S. health-care system to attain universal coverage.

A number of researchers from other countries, including England, Turkey, and Ghana, discussed their research findings and professional experiences. Lisa Harker, President of the Institute for Public Policy Research in London and the former child poverty “czar” for Great Britain, offered her perspectives on effective government-subsidized child care and poverty reduction programs. Jerome Rudolf Awortwe-Abban, from the Institute of Social Studies in The Netherlands, presented research on young Ghanaian women in the textile industry. Shakuntala Das, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, discussed her research on “Enhancing the Livelihood and Security of Women through Public Employment Policy in India.”

**Breaking Boundaries and Building Bridges: A Workshop Series**

During the summit, IWPR held a day-long workshop series on Women’s Activism and Public Vision that explored the basic values that

IWPR would like to thank the following donors who helped make the Economic Justice Summit a huge success.

**Patron ($5,000 and above)**
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AFSCME
inspire women's work, how those values shape goals and strategies, and how groups' similarities and differences may enhance or inhibit future collaborations. The goal of the series was to build new alliances among women who are active in all kinds of social justice movements—feminist organizations, religious and secular social justice efforts, civil rights groups, and others—in an effort to establish common ground that may lead to improved policies to benefit women.

Opening panelists Loretta Ross, founder of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, Sherita Edwards, of the Gamaliel Foundation, and Dr. Martha Burk, money editor of Ms. Magazine, talked about their experiences as women leaders and activists and the obstacles that confront them as they seek to collaborate with others. Dr. E. Faye Williams, Chair of the National Congress of Black Women, addressed the conference during a lunch session, discussing the intersections of race and gender and emphasizing the need to work together to achieve shared goals.

Keynote Speakers Tackle Issues of the Day

At summit plenaries, speakers such as Loretta Ross, founder of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, Gail Perry-Mason, author of *Girl, Make Your Money Grow!*, and Astrid Pregel, President of Feminomics Incorporated, translated their own struggles and eventual success into lessons for a strengthened women's movement. A reception Friday night featured U.S. Representative John Lewis, Georgia State Representative “Able” Mabel Thomas, and Georgia State Senator Nan Grogan Orrock, relating how their own experiences with economic insecurity inspired their work for social justice. Gail Perry-Mason discussed personal budgeting and Janice Mathis, Vice President of the Citizen Education Fund, urged attendees to turn barriers that seem to divide groups of women into bridges to cooperative action. Dr. Heidi Hartmann, Kim Gandy, and Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, representatives of the organizations that co-convened the summit, also spoke at plenary sessions addressing the needs of women and calling participants to action.

Summit Contributors

**Allies ($1,001-$2,500)**
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
National Education Association

**Supporters ($25-$100)**
Rosemary Batt
Jewel Bellush
Elizabeth Dolan
Helen Remick
Rosalyn Baxandall
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“What Research and Experience Tell Us About Women’s Poverty” panel participants Diana Spatz (left) of Low-Income Families Empowerment through Education and Anita Graham of Community Voices Heard.

Gail Perry-Mason, author of *Girl, Make Your Money Grow!*

Georgia State Representative “Able” Mable Thomas with summit organizers (from left) Latifah Lyles, Vice President of Membership at the National Organization for Women (NOW), Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, IWPR Affiliated Scholar and Director of the Research, Public Policy, and Information Center at the National Council of Negro Women, and Kim Gandy, President of NOW.
Making News on the Wage Gap and Women’s Employment

- *Forbes.com* cited research from *Still a Man’s Labor Market: The Long Term Earnings Gap*.
- Dr. Barbara Gault appeared live on *CNBC’s Squawk on the Street*.

Status of Women (and Girls) in States

- *Minnesota Public Radio*, the *Star Tribune* (MN), and the *Pioneer Press* (MN) quoted Erica Williams and cited research from *Status of Girls in Minnesota*.

Economic Security

- Dr. Vicky Lovell appeared as a guest on *ABC’s Capital Times* in Washington, DC.

Work and Family

- *Parade Magazine* cited IWPR’s research on paid sick leave in the United States.
- *The Today Show* (NBC) cited IWPR’s research on maternity leave in the United States.
- *The Washington Post* quoted Dr. Vicky Lovell on Family Medical and Leave Act changes.
- Dr. Vicky Lovell gave an on-air interview to *New Hampshire Public Radio* on the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- *The Sacramento Bee*, *Ventura Country Star*, *NBC 11*, and *Employment Law 360* cited IWPR’s research from *Valuing Good Health in California* report.

Democracy and Society

- *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* quoted former IWPR Director of Democracy and Society Programs Dr. Amy Caiazza on gender gaps in political elections.

IWPR’s General and Project Support

IWPR’s research, education, and outreach activities are funded and supported primarily by foundations, organizations, corporations, and individuals. The Institute is grateful for the support of the following foundations: the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ms. Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council for continued work on the status of women in the Gulf Coast who were affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; the Ford Foundation for IWPR’s work on sex and race discrimination in the workplace, paid family leave and job equality, interfaith activism, and older women’s economic security; the Annie E. Casey Foundation for IWPR’s work on job quality; the Rockefeller Foundation for studies on women and gender in the workplace; the Kellogg Alternative Finance Cluster, the Public Welfare Foundation, the Rockefeller Family Fund, and the Women’s Fund of Greater Milwaukee for support of our work/family research; the Sister-Fund for IWPR’s work on interfaith activism; the Russell Sage Foundation for work on older women’s economic security; the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Institute for Early Education Research, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for IWPR’s work on early care and education of children; the Girl Scouts of the United States of America and the Minnesota Women’s Foundation for work on improving the status of young women and girls; the National Academy of Engineering for research on the advancement of women in engineering; the Canadian International Development Agency for IWPR’s work on the Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa; the Nathan Cummings Foundation and The New York Women’s Foundation for IWPR’s work on the Status of Women in the States; the Sunrise Foundation for increasing IWPR’s visibility; and the Stewart R. Mott Charitable Trust for its general support.

IWPR would like to express our condolences for the loss of Stewart R. Mott. He was an important and innovative philanthropist devoted to social change and his charitable trust provided generous support for our work over the years.

IWPR Receives Four Star Rating

SAVE THE DATE!
2nd Annual IWPR Celebration
October 30th, 2008 • New York City

IWPR will hold a reception for members and friends in New York City on October 30th to provide an opportunity to discuss recent policy research and to celebrate another successful year of using information to inspire change. After the reception, IWPR members and friends will attend The 39 Steps, a hilarious adaptation of the Alfred Hitchcock film. Please join us! More details will be available soon at iwpr.org or contact Elisabeth Crum at 202-785-5100 ex 24 or crum@iwpr.org.

The Economic Status of Women in New York State
This report examines how women in New York State fare on eight indicators of women’s economic status, in comparison with women in other states and women nationally.
June 2008, IWPR No. R343
Report, 44 pages, available at iwpr.org

Women in the Wake of the Storm: Examining the Post-Katrina Realities of the Women of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast
(for details, see page 5)
April 2008, IWPR No. D481
Report, 32 pages, $10

Valuing Good Health in California: The Cost and Benefits of the Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Act of 2008
(for details, see page 1)
April 2008, IWPR No. B259
Report, 22 pages, available at iwpr.org

Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs
(for details, see page 11)
May 2008, IWPR No. G718
Report, 40 pages, $10

The Gender Wage Ratio
(for details, see page 5)
March 2008, IWPR No. C350
Fact Sheet, 2 pages, available at iwpr.org

Women at Greater Risk of Economic Insecurity: A Gender Analysis of the Rockefeller Foundation’s American Worker Survey
(for details, see page 1)
May 2008, IWPR No. D482
Report, 32 pages, $10

Why Americans Worry About Retirement Security, and Why Women Worry More than Men
May 2008, IWPR No. D483
Fact Sheet, 4 pages, available at iwpr.org

From Work to Retirement: Tracking Changes in Women’s Poverty Status
This report examines the extent and causes of women’s poverty from midlife to late retirement.
February 2008, IWPR No. D484
Report, 44 pages, available at iwpr.org

Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs
(for details, see page 11)
May 2008, IWPR No. G718
Report, 40 pages, $10

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May 2008, IWPR No. D483
Fact Sheet, 4 pages, available at iwpr.org

Status of Girls in Minnesota
(for details, see page 1)
April 2008, IWPR No. R342
Report, 76 pages, available at iwpr.org

Gifts Honor Mariam K. Chamberlain
The following donors have made generous contributions to the endowment of IWPR’s Mariam K. Chamberlain research fellowship in honor of Dr. Chamberlain’s 90th birthday:

Ellen Delany    Colette Shulman
Janice Monk     Katrina vanden Heuvel

You can help us celebrate Dr. Chamberlain by making your own donation in her honor. If you are interested, please contact Elisabeth Crum at 202-785-5100, ex 24 or crum@iwpr.org.

Dr. Mariam K. Chamberlain and Angela Carlberg, IWPR Research Assistant and former Mariam K. Chamberlain Fellow, talk with Dr. Susan Bailey of the Wellesley Centers for Women at Dr. Chamberlain’s 90th Birthday Celebration.
Rufina Hernandez is the Director of Human and Civil Rights for the National Education Association (NEA), which has 3.2 million members and supports programs and initiatives to improve public education. Ms. Hernandez is a valued member of IWPR's Program Advisory Committee. NEA helped support IWPR's Summit on Economic Justice for Women in April, and IWPR collaborated with the NEA in 2006 to research the relationship between the quality of teaching jobs and students’ educational outcomes.

Ms. Hernandez loves her work at the NEA because she is able to advocate for educators “who are doing a very important job in our country—educating our public school children.” She believes that public education is an essential component of a true democracy. At the NEA, she pushed for an end to gender discrimination and other forms of discrimination. She believes that discrimination in education has decreased over time, “but it is clear that we still have a way to go” to achieve equity. For instance, in sports, she notes that there are still huge deficits in budgets and opportunities being given to girls, as compared with boys.

“There are still gender gaps in the number of girls interested in math and science, but progress has been made,” she says. “And more and more women are going to college and becoming involved in what were once traditionally male fields.”

Prior to working for the NEA, Ms. Hernandez served as the Executive Director of the Latin American Research and Service Agency (LARASA), a community-based research and advocacy organization located in Denver. A licensed attorney, she received her B.A. degree in Political Science from the University of New Mexico and her Juris Doctorate from the Georgetown University Law Center.

Ms. Hernandez supports IWPR because she recognizes the need for objective research in formulating policies that benefit women. She believes that IWPR's mission of providing facts and data that other organizations can use to understand women's experiences and design public policies fills a critical niche. The Institute is grateful to Ms. Hernandez and to the NEA for their steadfast commitment to IWPR's mission.

Elisabeth Crum

Sara Rahnama served as an IWPR Research Intern this spring. She is a sophomore at the University of Maryland, majoring in history with a concentration in social history. In the fall, she will move to Nice, France, for a year to study French.

I decided to work with IWPR, because a family friend recommended it as an organization that takes the fight for equality seriously. Of the various projects I worked on during my semester at IWPR, I focused most on IWPR’s project to examine the effectiveness of consent decrees (legal settlements imposed by Courts) in preventing the discriminatory practices from reoccurring. Even though consent decrees are very common in sex and race discrimination lawsuits, particularly in harassment claims, there is little research on whether they fulfill their objectives and lead to a more supportive work environment for women. The project team is setting up a database of consent decree cases (which will be publicly searchable) and has selected a small number of cases for fieldwork on the impact of decrees during and after their legal life. I had the opportunity to find background information on a number of consent decrees, organize the existing literature, and add to the literature reviews.

To receive course credit for my internship, I was required to write a 20-25 page research paper on a topic related to the internship. I decided to examine the ways in which feminists have approached the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace over time and the relationship between activism, changes in sex discrimination law, and workplace practice. My hope is that the comprehensive report, which summarizes decades of sexual harassment activism, will serve as an important resource for both the consent decree project and future IWPR projects dealing with sexual discrimination and harassment.

Intern Spotlight: Effectiveness of Consent Decrees

Attention all Federal Employees!

Select Institute for Women’s Policy Research for the Combined Federal Campaign
IWPR Estimates the Costs of Meaningful Investments in Pre-Kindergarten Quality

Erica Williams

As more regions develop and expand pre-k programs, it is rare for states to provide sufficient funding to pay teachers adequate wages and to support other elements of quality. In May, IWPR released a new report exploring how improvements in pre-k quality affect the cost of service delivery. *Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs* examines the costs associated with improvements to teacher education and pay and class-size for school-day (six-hour), part-day (three-hour), and full-day (nine-hour) programs across a variety of settings. The report was funded by Pre-K Now and the National Institute for Early Education Research.

The report finds that the major expense of a pre-k program is instructional staff (62 percent of total costs for the highest quality school-day program go to salaries and benefits). However, according to the report’s cost increase matrix, which shows the percentage increase in costs associated with improvements to teacher education and class size, improving teacher pay and education can be relatively less expensive than reducing class size, depending on a state’s current quality standards. In addition to discussing costs, the report reviews the literature on the relative benefits of improving teacher qualifications and reducing class size, which suggests that teacher qualifications are an especially important factor in improving child outcomes. It provides examples of states that meet high quality standards, including North Carolina, New Jersey, and Tennessee.

IWPR researchers and study co-authors Dr. Barbara Gault and Erica Williams presented the study results to more than 60 state pre-k program administrators in a conference call organized by Pre-K Now. Other co-authors are Anne W. Mitchell, Judy Dey, and Olga Sorokina. The report is anticipated to inform the ongoing national conversation about the investments needed to ensure that children enter school ready to learn and succeed.

Fellow Spotlight:
Women’s Rights in the Middle East

Hafsa Kanoubi spent six weeks with IWPR as a 2008 Leader for Democracy fellow this spring, through a program based at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. She holds a master’s degree in Human Rights and Democratization from the University of Malta.

In June, Ms. Kanoubi returned to Morocco to take up her work with the Association for the Development of Rural Women. While at IWPR, Ms. Kanoubi consulted on the Institute’s Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa project. This study brings IWPR together with IFES, a Washington, DC-based organization supporting democratic institutions, and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre, with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency, in an exploration of women’s status in Lebanon, Morocco, and Yemen. The project involves the development of country-specific indicators, surveys, and training for grass-roots leaders in working with policy makers.
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