**2058: The year American women might see equal pay**

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WASHINGTON — When it comes to equal pay, the American woman is stuck in a proverbial waiting room. But the number on her ticket — the length of her stay — largely depends on where she lives and to whom she was born.

A new report from the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, released last week, predicts U.S. women won’t reach pay parity with men until 2058. And the wait could be much longer for those in Wyoming and Louisiana, for example, where women on average make less money than female peers in other states. Closing the gender wage gap is generations away in Wyoming, the study’s authors predict. The projected year: 2159. Louisiana ranks second to last by a half-century (2106) and is followed by North Dakota (2104).

To reach these dismal conclusions, researchers crunched U.S. census data: How many women in a given area were working? In management roles? In science, technology, engineering or math fields? At what pay? Rates of progress, the researchers found, varied drastically by state, race and educational attainment.

The unifying theme: Women across the country have a long way to go.

The analysis isn’t entirely bleak. As women’s earnings have grown (while men’s have stagnated), the gender pay gap narrowed sharply in the 1980s and ‘90s. In 2013, women made 78.3 cents for every dollar men earned, up from 60.2 cents in 1980.

During the past 3 decades, inflation-adjusted median earnings for women’s full-time, year-round work spiked nationally from $30,138 to $39,157. Men’s earnings decreased slightly from $50,096 to $50,033.

Since the early 2000s, though, progress toward wage equality has sputtered almost to a halt. Median earnings for women have remained largely consistent. But female labor force participation declined from 59.6 percent in 2002 to 57 percent in 2014, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Women also remain underrepresented in the highest-paying fields: engineering, technology and medicine. Across industries, they hold far fewer upper-management positions. For example, only 16.9 percent of Fortune 500 board seats are female-occupied.

Parity appears closer for East Coast women. New York has the narrowest wage gap: Empire State women earn 87.6 cents for every dollar banked by men. Maryland and the District of Columbia, trail slightly with 87.4 and 87, respectively.

Less urbanized states show the starkest disparities. The gender earnings ratio in Louisiana is 66.7, ranking dead last. Women in West Virginia (67.3) and Wyoming (67.9) don’t fare much better.

Florida women could reach equal pay first — in 2038. California and Maryland are tied for second (2042).

Women’s earnings differ by race and ethnicity: Across the largest ethnic groups in the United States, Asian Pacific Islander women earn the most annually at $46,000, making 88.5 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Native American and Hispanic women take home the least annual income at $31,000 and $28,000, respectively. Hispanic women, though, face the widest wage gap of America’s most prominent racial groups. The female-to-male ratio: 53.8 percent.

Women now outpace men in college enrollment. Those with a bachelor’s degree typically earn twice as much as those with less than a high school diploma.

But across all levels of education, men earn significantly more than women with equal schooling. The wage gap is the largest for those with the most educational attainment: Women with graduate degrees make only 69.1 percent of what men with graduate degrees earn. The share jumps to 71.4 percent for women with bachelor’s degrees. (Both groups take on comparable amounts of debt.)

The report’s conclusion: “These data indicate that women need more educational qualifications than men do to secure jobs that pay well,” researchers wrote.

Millennial women face a narrower wage gap, earning 85.7 cents for every dollar earned by male peers. More than 1 in 3 millennial women work in managerial or professional occupations, compared with 1 in 4 millennial men. It’s important to note that many female workers of this generation have not yet hit their childbearing years. Mixing motherhood and employment is an oft-cited driver of pay disparities.

The majority of senior citizens — people older than 65 — are women. Many work full time: 14 percent worked year-round in 2013, according to census data. But on average, they made less than younger demographics, or women 16 to 65: $37,000 annually, compared with $38,000 annually.