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### Who Runs the World?

In an article from *The Shriver Report*, Beyoncé states that “We need to stop buying into the myth about gender equality. It isn’t a reality yet” (Knowles-Carter par. 1). At this point in time, the women of the United States possess more rights and freedoms than ever before in history. So while girls might be getting closer to running the world, as Beyoncé would say, the idea that the women of America are no longer subordinate to men is an illusion. In fact, women receive significantly lower salaries each year just because of their gender. Data from Bernadette D. Proctor, Jessica L Semega, and Melissa A. Kollar’s article from the U.S Census Bureau, displays that women make, on average, 80 percent of the earnings of men (Proctor 10). To put this into perspective, for every dollar a man makes, a woman makes 80 cents without taking race or social status into consideration. Why is it that in the United States, a country that stands for equality, women are not being paid the same wages as men? Women should receive equal pay in the workforce because the male-female income difference results in women having to work harder to make the same salary as men, women having more difficulty being financially stable, and ending unequal pay would benefit more than just the United States’ female population.

Women being paid less than men results in women having to work an excessive amount of hours to make something closer to the same salary as their male coworkers. Catherine Hill et al from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) states in “The Simple Truth

About the Gender Pay Gap”, “From age 35 through retirement, women are typically paid 74-82 percent of what men are paid, depending on age. By the time workers reach 55-64 years old, women are only paid 74 percent of what their male peers are paid” (Hill 12). Due to the health issues and fatigue that many experience with age, some women will not be physically able to work extra hours every week as they get older. A multitude of women also do not get the opportunity to work additional hours because many are also expected to fulfill other traditional roles such as taking care of children and their households. While many women are proud to perform these tasks, providing financially for their families might force them to replace hours that would normally be spent raising their children with hours working.

Another effect of the gender earnings gap is that it makes it more difficult for women to be financially independent. As a result of being paid less than their male co-workers, women in the workforce get a later start on becoming financially stable. Hill et al from the AAUW supports this idea in “The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap” stating that “[W]omen who complete college degrees are less able than men to pay their student loans promptly, leaving them paying more in interest and for a longer time” (Hill 16). It will take more time for women to pay off student loans or get out of financial debt. Meanwhile, they must provide for themselves, possibly their family, and still start saving for the future with less money than they have worked for. Especially in America, financial stability and independence is a goal of the majority of the population. It is unacceptable that women are held back because of their gender, something that they have no control over.

Getting rid of the gender wage difference in the United States would benefit our nation as a whole. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that as of July 1, 2015, 50.8 percent of the

United State's population is female ("United States Quick Facts"). Women also make up a significantly large percent of product consumers in our country. Therefore, giving them larger salaries gives them the ability to spend more money. The Heidi Hartmann et al writes in the report "How Equal Pay for Working Women Would Reduce Poverty and Grow the American Economy" that "[t]he U.S. economy would have produced additional income of \$447.6 billion if women received equal pay; this represents 2.9 percent of 2012 gross domestic product" (Hartmann par. 3). Such a large increase in income would significantly improve the United States' economy. Thus, improving the conditions of the entire population, not just women's. This would be extremely beneficial to men as well. Equal pay would allow fathers to spend more time with their families and not have to work extra hours to make up for their wife's lower wages. Another way our country would benefit from equal pay is that poverty among single mothers decrease significantly.

The gender pay gap highlights the unequal treatment and lack of respect towards working women. The wage gap should be abolished because unequal pay towards the female population in the United States results in women being overworked in order to make the salary they deserve and women having a lack of financial stability. Not only would putting an end to unequal pay significantly contribute to the equal treatment of women, but it would also benefit the male population of our nation as well. The wage gap has decreased over time, but not quickly. Based off of data from Hill et al, 'If [the] change [towards closing the pay gap] continues at the slower rate seen since 2001, women will not reach pay equity with men until 2152" (Hill 4). The women of the U.S. do not have 135 years to wait for equal pay. If the citizens of America, both male and female, work together, the wage gap could decrease much faster. This country depends on both

men and women, so why is one treated as lesser than equal? The United States must abandon the traditional attitudes towards women until equality is no longer questioned. If we continue to ignore this issue, our country will not be able to reach our full potential. The pay gap itself even defies the values of equality held by the American people. The only way to overcome the setback of unfair pay is for both male and female to work together. Women make up over 50 percent of the United State's population, so what makes them unworthy of 100 percent of the benefits available to American citizens?

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