



2020

VOTER'S GUIDE

TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY



ABOUT CWEALF

The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund advocates for and empowers women and girls** in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. CWEALF works to create an equitable society where women and girls thrive through legal education, public policy & advocacy, and women's advancement & leadership.

CWEALF's Legal Education Program's Information and Referral (I&R) line is accessible via phone call or email Monday through Friday. If you seek legal information or assistance, call (860) 524-0601 or contact us via [email](mailto:info@cwealf.org). ¡Se habla español!

To learn more about CWEALF and our services, please visit our website at cwealf.org.

WHAT'S IN THE GUIDE?

In the middle of a **global pandemic** and nationwide reckoning with **systemic racism**, this Election Day marks the most important election of our lifetime - especially for women's rights, safety, and economic security. From now until November 3, 2020, it's time to urge candidates to center the voices and experiences of women, specifically women of color, in their campaigns and policy platforms.

Women have **felt the most severe** financial, social, and emotional impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis. Women, especially women of color, make up the majority of **essential workers** on the frontlines of the pandemic and risk their own health everyday to serve our communities and earn a paycheck. Women also continue to carry the majority of caregiving responsibilities in their families and juggle work with raising children or caring for loved ones during the pandemic.

On November 3, the future of our state and the ways in which it will continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, end systemic racism, and prioritize the needs of women and their families, are on the ballot.

CWEALF created this guide as a tool for voters to learn more about key issues critical to women in Connecticut, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and make their voices heard in this Election Cycle. Together, let's use Election 2020 to send a clear message: we won't wait any longer for economic security.

**includes women and girls who identify as cisgender, transgender, and nonbinary.

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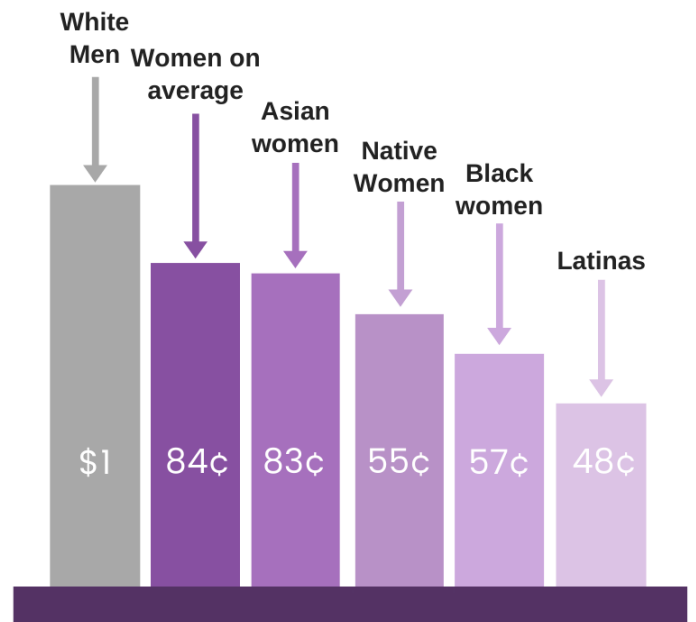
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PAY EQUITY

QUICK FACTS:

Women, especially women of color, continue to earn significantly less than men.

- Women in Connecticut typically make **\$0.84** for every dollar paid to men, an inequity **significantly larger for women of color**: Asian women working full time, year-round earn \$0.83, Black women in Connecticut typically earn \$0.57 cents, Latina women earn \$0.48 cents, and Native women earn \$0.55 for every dollar paid to white men.



Source: NWLC State by State - Connecticut Data.

- Intersectional identities are often overlooked when discussing the gender wage gap, especially within the LGBTQ+ community. Research shows that transgender women experience the **most severe wage gap** and that their wages decrease by nearly a third after they transition.
- **Workers with disabilities** also face a significant wage gap: full-time, year-round workers with a disability earn **87 cents** for every dollar earned by those with no disability. Research shows women with disabilities make 83% of what men with disabilities make.”

The wage gap begins early in womens’ careers and adds up over time.

- Research shows that just one year after college graduation, women are paid 82 percent of what men are paid. When controlling for factors known to affect earnings such as education, training and hours worked, women still earn 7% less than men just one year out of college.
- Although women comprise 56% of college students, they hold nearly **2/3 of the total student loan debt** nationwide. Black women graduate with the most student loan debt, averaging \$30,400, compared to \$22,000 for white women and \$19,500 for white men.
- The wage gap adds up over time: on average, women in CT lose **\$529,160** over the course of a 40-year career due to the gender wage gap. White women in CT lose \$637,280, Black women lose \$1,212,480, Latinas lose \$1,488,800 and Asian women lose \$552,840 due to the gender wage gap.

The gender wage gap exacerbates the economic impact of COVID-19, especially for women in frontline jobs.

- About **80% of healthcare workers** nationally are women. [According to the National Women's Law Center](#), women make up 85% of home health and personal care aides and 59% are women of color. Due to the wage gap, they lose \$5,000 a year.
- Sixty-six percent (**66%**) of **grocery store workers** are women, and 43% of them are women of color. Women in this occupation lose \$3,000 a year to the gender wage gap.
- The sectors most affected by the economic downturn are those that have high female employment including hospitality, restaurants and the travel industry.

PAY EQUITY: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Salary Range Transparency

In the hiring process, it is common for applicants to negotiate an amount that is 10-20% more than their existing salary. Since women and people of color already earn **significantly less** than white, non-Hispanic men, they would need to request a salary that is a particularly large percentage increase over their current pay for their request to be on-par with their white, non-Hispanic, male colleagues.



When employers hold all of the salary information, they are at a significant advantage in negotiating the lowest possible salary. This causes women and people of color to lose out most. CWEALF recommends legislation that requires employers to provide job applicants and current employees salary ranges to level the playing field regardless of gender or race and prevent inherent biases held by some employers.

Equal Pay for Comparable Work

CWEALF also supports legislation to require employers to pay their employees equal wages for comparable work, or work that requires substantially similar skill, effort, and responsibility that is performed under similar working conditions. “Equal pay for comparable work” **addresses inequity in pay** that results from a long history of sex-segregated occupations and different pay scales for jobs considered traditionally male vs. those considered traditionally female. Nine states, including MA, have adopted this language. For more information, [view CWEALF's fact sheet on 2020's H.B. 5383](#).

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS AT WORK

QUICK FACTS:

Women are overrepresented in the low-wage workforce and lack access to critical supports like paid sick leave and the ability to move up the career ladder.

- According to the National Women's Law Center, nearly **67%** of CT's **low-wage** workforce are women, the majority of whom are women of color. During the COVID-19 crisis, this makes women more vulnerable to job loss and less likely to have access to paid sick leave or paid family and medical leave to care for themselves or their families.
- Just 30% of the lowest paid workers in the U.S. have access to paid sick days. While Connecticut became the first state in the nation to require certain employers to provide paid sick leave in 2011, carve outs in the law continue to leave many workers across the state without access to the benefit, which is even more important during a pandemic.
- More than 350,000 low-wage, hourly shift workers in the state, mostly women and people of color, struggle to earn a stable income because of unpredictable and **erratic work schedules**. When an employer assigns, changes or cancels their shifts last minute, working mothers struggle to maintain stable child care, pursue education to advance their careers, receive medical care - or simply work enough hours at their job to pay for basic household needs.

- In Connecticut, 47.8% of women under 65 do not have an income sufficient to cover household essentials. These women workers are more likely to **not have the ability to work remotely** for their jobs, further preventing them from having a stable income for their families during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates multiple hurdles women face at work and at home.

- According to research from [LeanIn](#), during the pandemic women with children who work full-time are typically spending **20 more hours** per week on housework and caregiving than men in the same situation, causing increased stress and burnout.
- Along with the additional housework and childcare, women, especially women of color, report they are significantly more worried about paying for basic necessities including rent or mortgage payments or groceries than white men.

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS AT WORK: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CWEALF recommends Connecticut lawmakers revisit the state's current paid sick leave law to ensure that no worker - especially during a global pandemic - is forced to go to work sick, or risk their paycheck when they need to care for a sick loved one.

CWEALF is proud to lead the [Campaign for Paid Family Leave](#), a coalition that advocates for **comprehensive paid family and medical leave** for all workers. Candidates and elected officials must ensure timely and transparent implementation of Connecticut's landmark paid family and medical leave law passed in 2019. CWEALF also urges candidates and elected officials to educate their constituents on their rights under the new law and oppose any efforts to weaken the program.

Unstable and unpredictable work schedules add an additional burden on women, especially if they are the sole breadwinners in their homes. CWEALF is a member of the **Fair Work Week Coalition** led by [CT Working Families](#) and supports legislation that will increase protections for hourly workers including more predictable and stable work hours, resting periods in between long shifts, predictability pay for cancelled shifts, and access to additional hours when they become available.

CWEALF stands with the [YWCA Hartford Region](#) in calling on Connecticut to join the current states that have passed **The CROWN Act** to dismantle white supremacy culture, racism and discrimination in the workplace. The CROWN Act will ensure that workers, specifically Black women, are not discriminated against because of their hairstyle. [Click here to take action in support of the CROWN Act.](#)

CWEALF also supports ongoing actions to **combat gender and racial discrimination** at work, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure that all workers are covered by anti-discrimination protection in the workplace.

ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

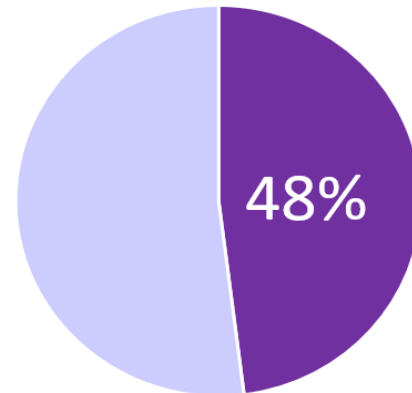
QUICK FACTS:

- While the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant challenges within Connecticut's child care system, the struggle to obtain **safe, reliable and affordable** child care persisted well before the public emergency. In addition to the [high cost of care](#), even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic Connecticut experienced a deficit of almost 50,000 infant/toddler child care slots.
- The child care industry has experienced some of the most severe impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Without adequate federal support, research from the Center for American Progress indicates that Connecticut will lose 48% of its childcare supply.
- Potential closures add more challenges to an existing child care crisis, where child care providers operate on thin margins and struggle to stay in business if they are not consistently collecting tuition and/or subsidy payments.

ACCESS TO SAFE & AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CWEALF urges lawmakers to expand Connecticut's **Care4Kids** program to parents enrolled in education or job training programs. Without access to Care 4 Kids when parents seek further education or training, families must overcome another hurdle to support themselves financially and move up the career ladder. CWEALF also recommends legislation to expand access to Care 4 Kids to families who are experiencing homelessness.

Percentage of Expected CT Child Care Supply Lost to COVID-19 Impact



Source: Center for American Progress, 2020.

Child care providers are the backbone of our workforce and wellbeing of the state's economy but are often overlooked as small businesses. Connecticut must ensure that all child care providers are paid a living wage, especially family child care providers (FCCs) who earn wages significantly below minimum wage. CWEALF also supports legislation that encourages entrepreneurs to open child care centers, including industry-specific business training and financial support.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights both the importance of Connecticut's child care system and the inequities that exist within it. For this reason, Connecticut should take action to initiate **universal child care** and ensure access to child care for families across the state, especially those who are left out of the current system. During and after the COVID-19 crisis, CWEALF urges candidates and lawmakers to investigate and advance innovative approaches to make the state's child care system more accessible and affordable for all families.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE LEGISLATURE

Critical policy decisions, especially those to address systemic racism, must be informed by the **experiences, voices, and input of people of color**. Currently, last-minute meeting agendas, opaque and inconsistent testimony signups, lack of remote participation options, and absence of a variety of hours, times, and places for participation present significant barriers to participating in the process and often ensure that only the most privileged voices are heard by legislators.

Earlier this year, CWEALF joined over 100 advocacy organizations across the state to send a letter to Governor Lamont and legislative leadership demanding a transparent and accessible legislative process that allows for meaningful public engagement.

The letter urges the legislature to **provide accessible opportunities** for engagement during public hearings and informational forums, including accessible technology to allow people to participate virtually or via teleconference, open and transparent committee meetings, access to legislative documents and materials, and sufficient public notice of legislative activities. [Click here to read the full letter & recommendations.](#)

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES CRITICAL TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY

Pay equity, rights and protections at work, access to safe and affordable childcare and improving access to the legislature are not the only policy changes necessary for women's economic security. See below for important information and resources about other issues critical to women in our state.

Domestic and Sexual Violence: Domestic and sexual violence impact women's economic security. CWEALF is proud to continue to partner with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence to advocate for increased protections for victims and survivors. Learn more from the [CCADV](#) and the [Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#).

Housing: CWEALF supports actions to cancel rent during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as legislation to increase access to affordable housing and combat restrictive zoning laws that continue to segregate Connecticut. Learn more via [Desegregate CT](#) and [Connecticut Fair Housing Center](#).

Immigrant Rights: Undocumented immigrants continue to be left behind in critical policy decisions, especially in response to COVID-19. The Connecticut General Assembly needs to expand access to HUSKY insurance to include all undocumented immigrants and provide

a COVID-19 relief fund specifically for undocumented immigrants and their families. Learn more from [CT Students for a Dream](#).

LGBTQIA+ Rights: All people, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, should be protected under the law and free from discrimination or harassment. CWEALF supports legislation to advance and protect the rights of our state's LGBTQIA+ community. Learn more from [CT Equality](#).

Police Accountability: Police brutality against the Black community is a feminist issue; we cannot fight for gender equity without dismantling white supremacy, and we will not achieve gender justice without racial justice. CWEALF supports our community partners leading on this issue, including [ACLU of Connecticut](#).

Reproductive Rights & Healthcare: CWEALF is a proud member of the Coalition for Choice, a group led by

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) that advocates for access to comprehensive healthcare and reproductive choice. Connect with [Planned Parenthood Votes! Connecticut](#) and [NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut](#).

GET INVOLVED!

Are You a Champion for Women & Girls? Pledge to VOTE on November 3.

- **Print the pledge** on the last page of this guide and snap a selfie!
- Share why YOU plan to vote this year. Post your photo on social media (see below) and be sure to tag CWEALF on Facebook & Instagram.

Find Your District and See Who Represents You

- Visit the Connecticut General Assembly's website, www.cga.ct.gov.
- Scroll to the middle of the page to the "Find Your Legislator" box.
- Insert your town, street name and number and click Find to bring you to your district's elected officials.
- The "Title (Contact)" column indicates who is your state Representative and who is your state Senator. Next to each title in parenthesis is a number that indicates the district you live in. For example, State Representative District 003 indicates that you live in the 3rd district.

Find Candidates in Your District

- Visit vote411.org for election information specific to your district and for personalized voting information, including what's on your ballot, voter registration, and your polling place."
- To find events such as forums or debates in your district, search for your candidates online and on Facebook under the "events" tab. See the next page for sample questions and tips for talking to candidates about pay equity, rights and protections at work, access to safe and affordable childcare, and access to the legislature.



Make a Plan to Vote

- If you are unable to vote in-person during this election due to the COVID-19 pandemic, cast your vote via **absentee ballot**. Don't let your opportunity to vote and make your voice heard, go to waste! Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, absentee ballots will be sent to every eligible voter in Connecticut.
- After filling it out, you must return the ballot via the United States Postal service, in person in your Town Clerk's office, or via the secure drop box that the Office of the Secretary of State has provided to each town (most likely located outside of your town's town

hall). This must be done by the close of polls, 8:00PM on Election Day to be counted. To learn more information on absentee ballots, [visit the Secretary of State's website here](#).

Check out the [League of Women Voters of Connecticut](#) for additional information regarding voting rights and related resources.

TALK TO YOUR CANDIDATES

Use this page when attending virtual or in-person events, debates, or forums in your district, or when calling or emailing candidates to ask them where they stand on women's economic security.

PAY EQUITY

Pay equity is important to me because [share your story here]. What does pay equity mean to you, and if elected what will you do to combat the gender wage gap?

It's appalling that in 2020, women still do not earn as much as men. If elected, what will you do to ensure that Connecticut continues to move forward towards closing the gender wage gap?

If elected, what will you do to help women and their families recover financially from the current pandemic, and get rid of the economic hurdles that could affect them if another pandemic were to happen in the future?

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS AT WORK

Women, especially women of color, are often forced to choose between earning a paycheck and their health. If elected, will you advocate for the review and **strengthening** of the current paid sick leave law in Connecticut?

I supported the passage of Connecticut's paid family and medical leave law because [share your story here]. If elected, what will you do to ensure the law is implemented efficiently and in a way that is **transparent** to the public?

Do you support fair work week legislation that will treat all employees with respect, fairness, and equity? What additional actions will you take to combat discrimination and unfair treatment of workers throughout the state?

Black women are disproportionately targeted for their **natural hair** and hair styles in the workplace. Do you support the **CROWN Act**?

ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

Working parents should not have to halt their lives or advancement in the workforce because they lack access to affordable child care. If elected, would you push for the expansion of the **Care4Kids program** to help parents, especially single mothers, who are trying to go back to school or receive career training?

If elected, what will you do to help Connecticut achieve affordable, accessible and reliable childcare for families, and to make sure educators and childcare providers are being compensated fairly for their work?

IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE LEGISLATURE

What have you done, or what will you do, if elected, to **empower** your constituents to voice their thoughts, opinions and ideas at the legislature?

Have you noticed that the legislature is largely inaccessible to the public? If elected, how will you work to reform current processes to ensure that **all Connecticut residents** can make their voice heard?

STAY CONNECTED!

Election Day is November 3, 2020. But the work doesn't end there!

Stay in the know by signing up to receive CWEALF's action alerts here:

<https://bit.ly/CWEALFAction>

Be sure to "Like" and Follow CWEALF on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (see below!)

Donate to CWEALF: <https://bit.ly/CWEALFdonate>



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[@PaidLeaveforCT](https://twitter.com/PaidLeaveforCT)

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**I AM A CHAMPION FOR
WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

I VOTE.

