knowledge the truth about our nation's history of violence. It is vital-tions under which poor white men

farms.

Now, I'll fast-forward to the end of

Our four daughters

## **Facts bridge** false pay gap

By Anita U. Hattiangadi

Moms at work

The average number of hours per week worked by women with children age 6 to 17 has increased:

Women 33.1

Work hours per week

Women make about 75 cents for every dollar men earn: You may hear this "fact" repeatedly on Thursday, the so-called "Equal Pay Day" — the day on which women's cumulative earnings since January 1999 supposedly will equal what men made just last year.

As the 75-cents figure underscores, women still make far less than men for the same job. Right?

Wrong, Our research shows there is no pay gap between male and female full-time workers age 21 to 3 who live alone, and a gap of only 3% among full-time

who live alone, and a gap of only 3% among full-time workers of that age who are married but without chidren. In fact, as early, as 1971, never-married women in their. 30s who had worked continuously earned

slightly higher incomes than their male counter-

parts.
The 75-cent statistic The 75-cent statistic is not evidence that women are paid less than men for the same job. It is simply the ratio of men's to women's average annual earnings. That doesn't account for such relevant economic furctors ac experience. factors as experience and tenure, years and type of education, hours of work and occupation

all of which can differ considerably between men and women, like it or not Let's compare apples to apples by looking at the median annual earnings of men and women with the

neural annual earnings of the radius (when 35 to 44 with psychology degrees working as social scientists earn 101% of their male equivalents' earnings. Women that age with engineering degrees working as

regineers earn 95% as much as male counterparts. Faced with such evidence, activists assert that women are forced into lower-paying jobs. But there is no evidence that discrimination dictates occupational no evidence that discrimination dictates occupations choice to any degree today. Rather, certain occupations (e.g., teaching) offer real advantages to women, such as schedule flexibility and summers off. This reflects that women still tend to be families' primary caregivers and, as such, often take time out of the workforce. Many accept jobs that accommodate family needs.

## A gradual shift

We are slowly evolving away from the June Cleavers of decades past. First, more women entered the workforce, but often quit to have families. Then women started going back to work after the children were older. Now, married women with children are staying in the workforce at more than twice the rate they did in 1960. Women want it all — marriage, children and a career — and so are working more than before.

Their improved pay reflects that: In almost one-quarter of dual-earner families, the wife now earns more than the husband.

more than the husband.

more than the husband.

Those flogging the specious "pay gap" statistic propose to fix it by installing a complicated government system to raise pay for women in female-dominated jobs, with points assigned to all jobs, then pay equalized for those in supposedly underpaid jobs that also happen to be dominated by women.

This "comparable worth" scheme was proposed in the 1970s, but lost momentum after states that tried it recognized its shortcomings. Now comparable worth has been resurrected and is being pushed in Congress and about half the states' legislatures.

But there are many questions about how comparable worth would work. Who will decide whether jobs are of equal, value? What about the role of the free

ble worth would work. What about the role of the free market in setting wages? Should a typing-pool supervisor earn the same as a network administrator simply because these jobs have been assigned the same number by a government bureaucrat?

## No solutions

Comparable-worth measures create a host of prob-lems without solving any. While pay goes up for work-ers who keep their jobs, increased costs to employers limit joke opportunities for all.

Equal pay and opportunity for women are already the law through the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Citing misleading statistics to incite women and make them feel victimized does not do justice to the real debate: How to help working parents better balance work and family.

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