

The Best and Worst States to Be a Woman

Introducing the U.S. Women,
Peace, and Security Index 2020



GIWPS

Georgetown Institute for
Women, Peace and Security

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Georgetown University’s Institute for Women, Peace and Security seeks to promote a more stable, peaceful, and just world by focusing on the important role women play in preventing conflict and building peace, growing economies, and addressing global threats like climate change and violent extremism. The institute pursues this mission by conducting research that is accessible to practitioners and policymakers, convening global events, establishing strategic partnerships, and nurturing the next generation of leaders. Melanne Vermeer, the first U.S. ambassador for global women’s issues, is the Institute’s executive director. Hillary Rodham Clinton is the Institute’s honorary founding chair.

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Overview

Our new and comprehensive measure of women's rights and opportunities in the United States reveals vast differences across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, with Massachusetts at the top, scoring almost four times better than Louisiana at the bottom.

This first-ever examination of women's status along the dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security across the 50 states and the District of Columbia reveals vast disparities across place and race. It highlights that much work needs to be done at the federal and state levels to achieve gender equality across the nation. Gender inequalities are compounded by racial and class injustice.

What is the United States Women, Peace, and Security Index?

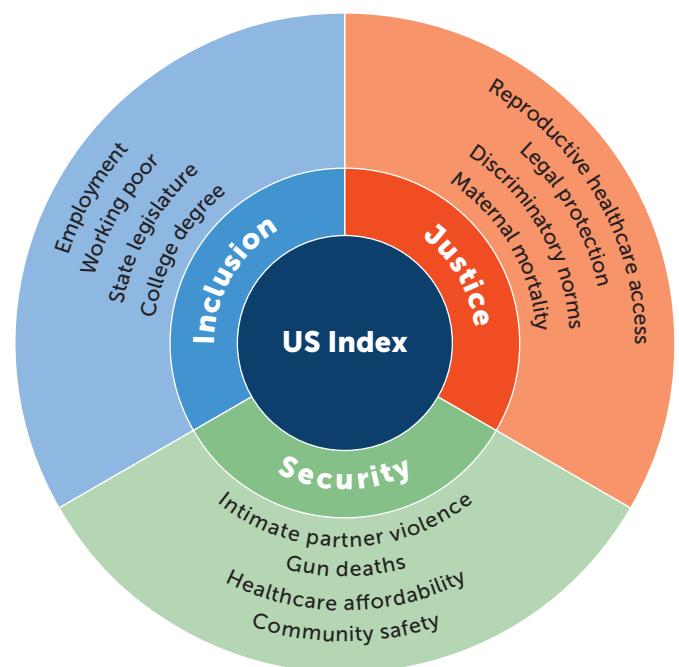
The US WPS Index captures key aspects of women's status at home, in the community, and in the economy and society.

The index is structured around three basic dimensions: inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal laws and informal discrimination); and security (at the individual and community levels; figure 1). The index and its 12 indicators, grouped into these three dimensions, provide a standardized, quantitative, and transparent measure for ranking all states.

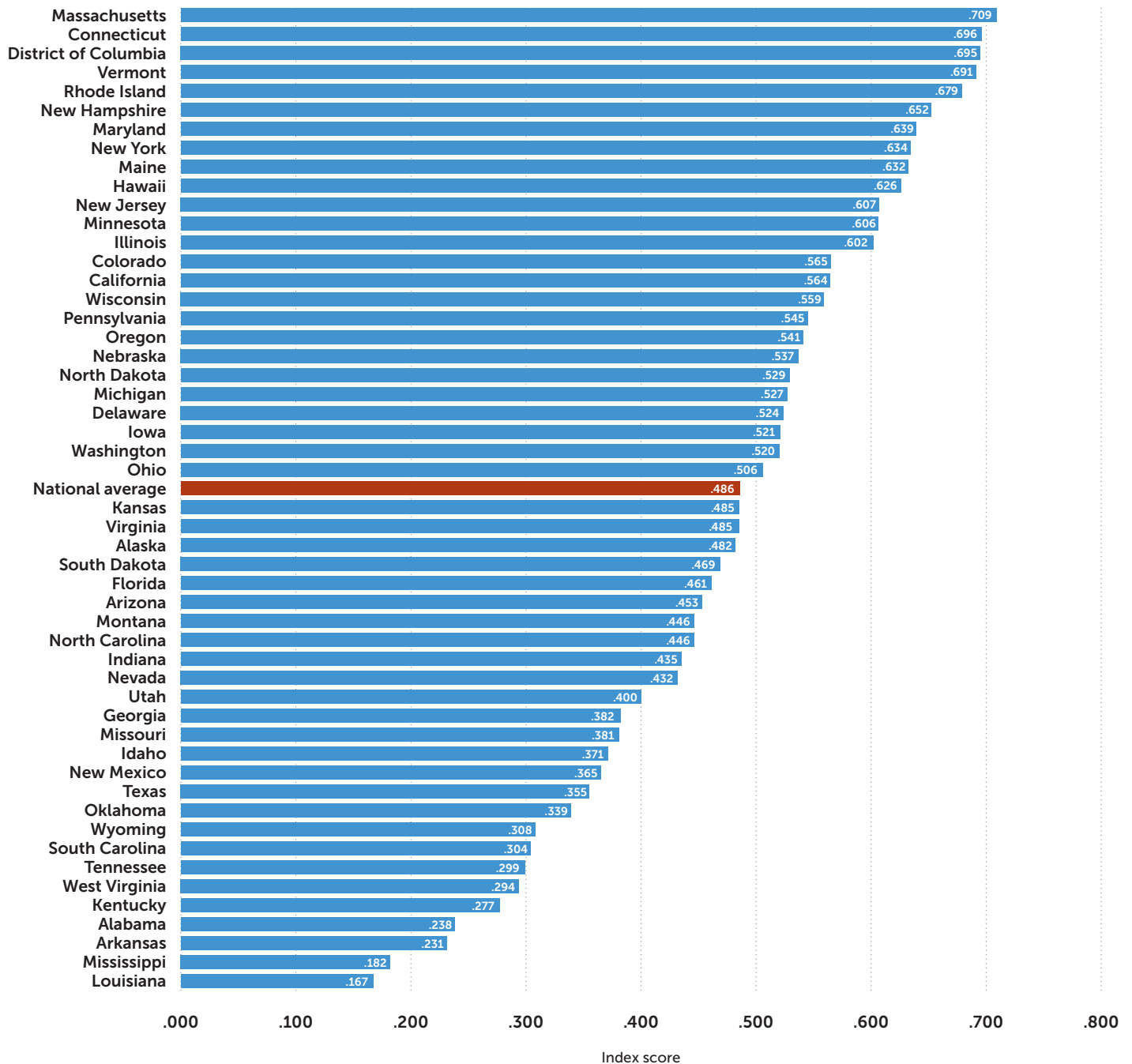
What does the index show?

Our new and comprehensive measure of women's well-being, rights, and opportunities in the United States reveals vast differences across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. There is an enormous range in performance, from Massachusetts at the top (.709) to Louisiana at the bottom (.167), on a 0–1 scale. A full ranking of all states and the District of Columbia is shown in figure 2.

FIGURE 1 The US Women, Peace, and Security Index: Three dimensions and 12 indicators



Note: For definitions of indicators see appendix.
Source: Authors.

FIGURE 2 State rankings on the US index, 2020

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates.

Our analysis reveals key achievements and major deficits behind the striking variation in the index across states.

Some highlights:

First, differences across states are largest for reproductive healthcare access and legal protection. In Wyoming, fewer than 1 in 20 women live in a county with an abortion provider, compared with 19 in 20 women in California,

Connecticut, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia. Only 9 states have mandated paid parental leave, and 16 states have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

Second, major racial disparities affect the status of women in many states—and white women typically do best. Racial gaps are most marked for college degree attainment, maternal mortality, and representation in the state legislature. On

average, 38 percent of white women have completed college, almost double the rate of Native American women. Large disparities also mark maternal mortality—in New Jersey, the maternal mortality rate is 132 deaths per 100,000 live births among Black women, almost four times the rate among white women. In 26 states, there are no Hispanic women represented in the state legislature.

Third, there is some good news. Women are graduating from college at high and rising rates¹ and earn a majority of bachelor's degrees. According to a survey conducted for the Georgetown Institute of Women, Peace and Security in August 2020 by YouGov/PerryUndem, solid majorities of Americans support gender equality and recognize that equality involves equal pay, livable-wage jobs, parental leave, and access to childcare and to affordable healthcare including birth control and the full range of reproductive healthcare services. The survey also reveals that:

- Four in five adults believe that it is important for elected officials to work on issues affecting gender equality.
- About two in three adults believe that the country would be better off with more women in political office and that access to abortion is an important part of women's rights and equality.²
- Most adults also recognize that only a minority of women in the United States have access to these services and opportunities. Respondents are especially likely to say that women lack access to affordable childcare—an unmet need that has been exacerbated and brought into sharper relief by the COVID-19 crisis.
- About 83 percent of adults believe that, in light of the COVID-19 crisis, it is just as or even more important that women be paid the same as men for equal work.

Fourth, however, there are major differences in views on multiple aspects of gender equality, especially between women and men and according to race and political affiliation. Figure 3 reflects the diversity of views emerging from the survey's question: *What does gender equality look like to you?* The words in green represent the positive changes respondents want to see, and the words in grey reflect harmful practices that need to end.

Fifth, the index demonstrates that good things often go together. A number of states—from New Hampshire and Massachusetts to California and Oregon—have done well in extending protections and expanding opportunities, and individual attitudes and norms are supportive of gender equality. These 4 states are among the 33 that have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, signaling support for women's rights and equality. Eleven states, including Connecticut, Hawaii, and Minnesota, as well as the District of Columbia, score in the top two quintiles on inclusion, justice, and security. However, New Hampshire is the only state that performs well (in the top two quintiles) for all 12 of the US WPS indicators.

Sixth, there are clear patterns in regional performance. For example, all 6 states in the Northeast region are among

FIGURE 3 What does gender equality look like to you?

Responses to the question: What does gender equality look like to you? In other words, how would you know that we've reached full gender equality in our country?



Note: Larger text size corresponds to more frequent responses.

Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

the 10 best performing states nationally, while all 5 of the worst performing states are in the Southeast region.³ Yet location is not a sole determinant: there are major differences within regions. Thus, while Colorado ranks 14th overall, its neighbors, Utah and Wyoming, rank 36th and 43rd.

Seventh, women face serious justice and security constraints:

- In 37 states, domestic abusers subject to protective orders are not required to relinquish firearms.
- In 44 states, there is no legislated minimum wage above the low-income threshold.⁴
- In 17 states, including Arizona, Arkansas, and Idaho, at least one in three men believe that it is better for men to be the breadwinner while women tend to the home, revealing adverse norms that obstruct women's economic opportunities.⁵
- In 17 states, fewer than half of women feel safe walking alone at night within a mile of their neighborhood.⁶

Finally, money matters, with state per capita GDP associated with better index scores. Nonetheless, some states do far better on the US WPS Index—or far worse—than their per capita income rank, suggesting that money is not the whole

story. For example, Maine ranks 44th in per capita GDP but 9th on the index—a 35-place gap. Wyoming, on the other hand, ranks 34 places lower on the index than its GDP per capita rank (see statistical table 3).

Ways forward

Looking ahead, establishing women’s rights in laws that ensure safety at home and at work and that promote equality and inclusion is essential. Because such protection is not comprehensive at the national level, there is enormous variation across the United States. The state in which a woman lives determines her ability to file a workplace sexual harassment claim, her level of protection from an abusive partner, and her ability to take paid time off for caregiving. And these protections are just with respect to the laws on paper and do not take into account the potential costs and obstacles to enforcement of rights.

Racial and class injustice exacerbate gender inequalities and vice versa. Black, Hispanic, and Native American women are paid less than men and white women for the same work,

are less likely than white women to hold a high school or college degree, and more likely than white women to be living in poverty, be part of the working poor, and not to receive health insurance through their employer.

Closing gaps is a priority. The federal government needs to provide fuller legal protections and stronger social safety nets. The federal and state governments can play a critical role to ensure that the intersectional challenges across gender, race, and class lines are recognized and addressed, not denied. The persistence of gendered and racial economic disparities limits economic growth in good times and even more so in bad times. These disparities have been exposed and exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis, accentuating the need to address racial justice in efforts to advance gender equality.

Activists, advocacy networks, and researchers, along with leaders inside and outside government, have been working hard for many years to advance this agenda. We hope that this and future editions of the US WPS Index help hold decisionmakers to account and guide efforts to advance the status of all women and girls in the United States.

*Major racial disparities affect the status of women
in many states—and white women typically do best.*

THE STATE OF WOMEN

BY IRENE BERMAN-VAPORIS, LAWSON PARKER, AND ROSEMARY WARDLEY

Employment • Education • Maternal mortality • Political clout • Physical safety

How U.S. women fare in these key aspects of life varies widely across the nation, according to a new benchmark of women's well-being. The 2020 U.S. Women, Peace and Security Index measures women's inclusion in society, sense of security, and exposure to discrimination. It shows how obstacles and opportunities for women differ from state to state, driven by economic, racial, and ethnic disparities, among other factors. National Geographic partnered with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security to illustrate the U.S. index.

The index measures three categories, each composed of four subcategories.

● Inclusion ● Justice ● Security

National average

Employment
43% Women age 16 and older who work 35 hours or more every week

Education
33% Women age 25 and older who have a bachelor's degree or higher

Government representation
30% Seats held by women in both chambers of the state legislature

Working poor
6% Poverty among women who worked 27 weeks or more in the past year

Legal protection
2.5 Number of key laws (out of seven) enacted to protect women's rights

Discriminatory norms
28% Men age 18 and older who say it's better if women work within the home

Reproductive health care
62% Women living in a county with a clinic that provides abortion services

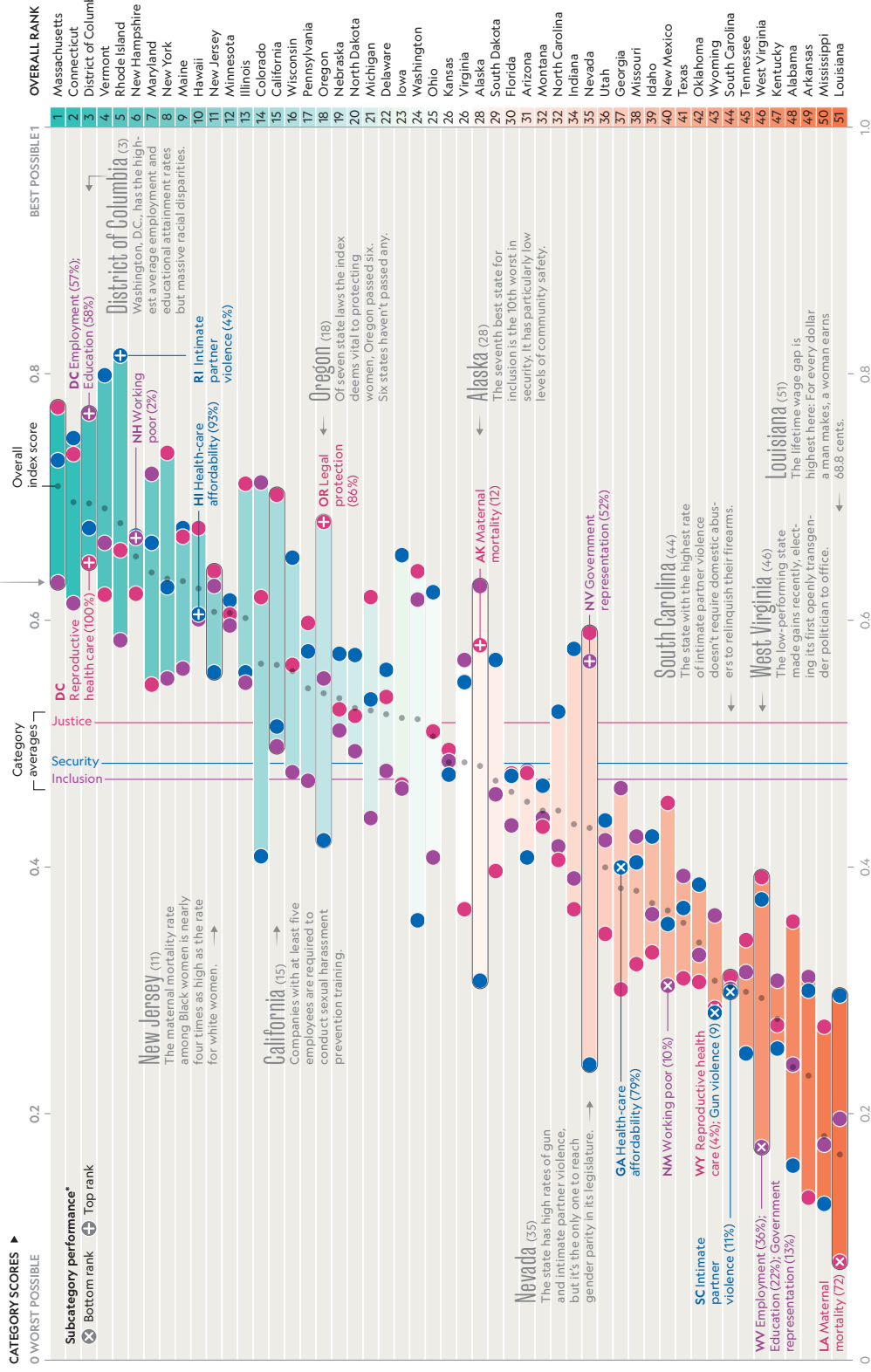
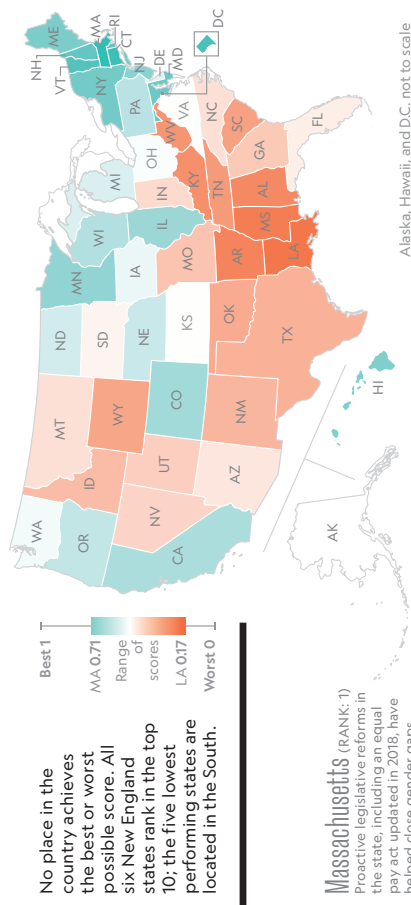
Maternal mortality
30 Deaths per 100,000 live births from any cause related to pregnancy

Gun violence
3 Deaths per 100,000 women from gun-related homicides or suicides in the past year

Intimate partner violence
7% Physically or sexually harmed or stalked in the past year by a partner

Health-care affordability
88% Women who visited a doctor in the past year without financial difficulty

Community safety
58% Women age 18 and older who aren't afraid to walk alone at night in their neighborhood



CHAPTER 1

Introducing the US Women, Peace, and Security Index

The state in which a woman lives determines her ability to file a workplace sexual harassment claim, her level of protection from an abusive partner, and whether she can take paid time off for caregiving.

Women's ability to participate fully in the economy, politics, and society is crucial for the well-being not only of women, but also of their family, the economy, and society. The rights and protections of women shape their current well-being and future prospects. And they vary greatly according to where a woman lives in the United States.⁷

Given the intersectional and overlapping nature of advantage and disadvantage, women have different access to opportunities based on their race, ethnicity, and income. Black women and their communities contend with the legacies of slavery and systemic racism, and Native American women and their communities contend with the legacies of genocide and forced displacement, factors that are linked to higher risks of poverty⁸ and maternal mortality.⁹

The coronavirus pandemic has both exposed and worsened the injustices faced by women, who are more likely to work in frontline jobs, carry the double burden of being breadwinner and primary caregiver, and be laid off.¹⁰ COVID-19 has also hit Black, Native American, and Hispanic¹¹ communities hardest, with higher rates of infection and deaths,¹² alongside harsher economic impacts.¹³

Yet the disadvantages facing women existed long before the pandemic's onset, underlining the need for a comprehensive examination of chronic barriers. Developed by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS), the US Women, Peace, and Security (US WPS) Index captures the well-being of women in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Index incorporates three basic dimensions

of women's well-being: inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal laws and informal discrimination); and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels). It quantifies these three dimensions through each state's performance on 12 indicators that determine a state's index score, ranging from 0 (worst possible) to 1 (best possible). This methodology is adapted from the global Women, Peace, and Security Index introduced in 2017 and updated in 2019, that evaluates women's status and well-being across some 167 countries around the world.¹⁴ In 2019, the United States ranked 19th globally on that index (box 1.1).

This report dives deeper into women's well-being across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, closely examining key trends and patterns and highlighting racial disparities. Our data and analysis are complemented by a public opinion survey conducted in August in partnership with YouGov and PerryUndem, which illuminates current public views, perceptions, and priorities, highlighting differences between men and women across race and party affiliation.¹⁵ When asked what gender equality looks like to the respondent, the open-ended responses were diverse but highlighted the importance of equal opportunities, women in power, rights and laws, equality at work, and the absence of harassment, violence, and discrimination (figure 1.1; see also figure S2.2 in spotlight 2 at the end of chapter 2). The words in green in figure 1.1 represent the positive changes respondents want to see, and the words in grey reflect harmful practices that need to end.

FIGURE 1.1 What does gender equality look like to you?

Responses to the question: What does gender equality look like to you? In other words, how would you know that we've reached full gender equality in our country?



Note: Larger text size corresponds to more frequent responses.

Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

This report exposes both achievements and gaps to inform and inspire activists, policymakers, and educators, along with investors and leaders at all levels working to advance women's well-being. While the data used to construct the index precede the onset of COVID-19, the pandemic's effects are considered extensively. We hope to update the analysis in the future to reflect the repercussions of COVID-19.

What are the headlines?

Our new and comprehensive measure of women's well-being, rights, and opportunities in the United States reveals vast differences across states, with a range from Massachusetts at the top (.709) to Louisiana at the bottom (.167) on a 0 (worst) to 1 (best) scale. A full ranking of all states and the District of Columbia is shown in figure 1.2.

Analysis of the index results reveals key achievements and major deficits behind the striking variation across states. These are explored in detail in the chapters that follow, but in brief we find the following:

First, differences across states are largest for reproductive healthcare access and legal protection. In Wyoming, fewer than 1 in 20 women live in a county with an abortion

provider, compared with 19 in 20 women in California, Connecticut, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia. Only 9 states have mandated paid parental leave, and 16 states have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

Second, major racial disparities affect the status of women in many states—and white women typically do best. Racial gaps are most marked for college degree attainment, maternal mortality, and representation in the state legislature. On average, 38 percent of white women have completed college, almost double the rate of Native American women. Large disparities also mark maternal mortality—in New Jersey, the maternal mortality rate is 132 deaths per 100,000 live births among Black women, almost four times the rate among white women. In 26 states, there are no Hispanic women represented in the state legislature.

Third, there is some good news. Women are graduating from college at high and rising rates¹⁶ and earn a majority of bachelor's degrees. According to a survey conducted for the Georgetown Institute of Women, Peace and Security in August 2020 by YouGov/PerryUndem, solid majorities of Americans support gender equality and recognize that equality involves equal pay, livable-wage jobs, parental leave, and access to childcare and to affordable healthcare including birth control and the full range of reproductive healthcare services. The survey also reveals that:

- Four in five adults believe that it is important for elected officials to work on issues affecting gender equality.
- About two in three adults believe that the country would be better off with more women in political office and that access to abortion is an important part of women's rights and equality.¹⁷
- Most adults also recognize that only a minority of women in the United States have access to these services and opportunities. Respondents are especially likely to say that women lack access to affordable childcare—an unmet need that has been exacerbated and brought into sharper relief by the COVID-19 crisis.
- About 83 percent of adults believe that, in light of the COVID-19 crisis, it is just as or even more important that women be paid the same as men for equal work.

Fourth, however, there are major differences in views on multiple aspects of gender equality, especially between women and men and according to race and political affiliation. Figure 3 reflects the diversity of views emerging from the survey's question: *What does gender equality look like to you?* The words in green represent the positive changes respondents want to see, and the words in grey reflect harmful practices that need to end.

Fifth, the index demonstrates that good things often go together. Eleven states, including Connecticut, Hawaii, and Minnesota, as well as the District of Columbia, score in the top two quintiles on inclusion, justice, and security. However, New Hampshire is the only state that performs well (in the top two quintiles) for all 12 of the US WPS indicators. (Figure 2.5 in chapter 2 visualizes states' relative performance on each of the indicators.)

BOX 1.1 Where the nation stands globally—insights from the global Women, Peace, and Security Index

The global Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index, first published by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo in 2017 and updated in 2019, measures the well-being of women in 167 countries across the three dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security. The United States ranked 19th on the 2019/20 global index, following Germany and Portugal. On the inclusion dimension, the United States is on par with other countries in the top 25. However, its inclusion score is depressed by women's low share of congressional seats—fewer than one in four. While much of the world has boosted women's representation through gender quotas, the United States has not. At current rates of progress, the United States will not reach gender parity until 2108—an 88-year delay.¹

On justice metrics, the United States ranks among the top 10 countries. However, it has not passed a constitutional amendment barring discrimination against women nor is it a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is also notable that the gender wage gap in full-time employment averages 20 cents on the dollar and is much wider for women of color. And the United States, Papua New Guinea, Suriname, and a handful of Pacific Island countries are the only countries without legally guaranteed paid maternity leave.²

The United States ranks 35th globally on the WPS Index security dimension. While only about 4 percent of women have reported intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, nearly 37 percent have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner at some point in their life. American society faces a unique crisis of lethal intimate partner violence because of the intersection of domestic abuse and the widespread availability of firearms. The risk of homicide for women subjected to domestic violence increases fivefold when a gun is present, and 5.5 million adult women have been shot at or threatened with a gun by an intimate partner at some point during their life.³ As for community safety, the United States has a large gender gap: 79 percent of men report feeling safe walking alone at night in their community but only 56 percent of women do,

a gender gap of 22 percentage points. The global gender gap is 7 percentage points.

These key deficits pull the US global ranking 10 places below its ranking on income per capita. This divergence also underlines that national wealth is not necessarily a good indicator of women's well-being. Our nationally representative survey conducted by YouGov and PerryUndem in August 2020 suggests that Americans recognize this challenge: almost half (46 percent) do not believe that the United States is a global leader in gender equality, and two-thirds believe that the United States still has work to do to achieve full gender equality.

"When women run more things, in politics and businesses of all fields. When they are treated more equal to their male counterparts. When affordable healthcare is available on all levels for women to pursue careers and/or families. When they can safely live a decent life with no violence, stress, or fear."

*—Man from Arizona, age 67,
on what gender equality looks like to him⁴*

The United States recently signaled its commitment to advancing the women, peace and security agenda when Congress signed the Women, Peace and Security Act into law with strong bipartisan support after years of civil society advocacy. It is a comprehensive law to promote women's leadership in ending wars and building peace that includes a governmentwide strategy, training requirements, and progress reporting guidelines. Four US departments and agencies—State, Defense, Homeland Security, and the US Agency for International Development—have released plans for implementing the 2019 governmentwide strategy to promote women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution.⁵

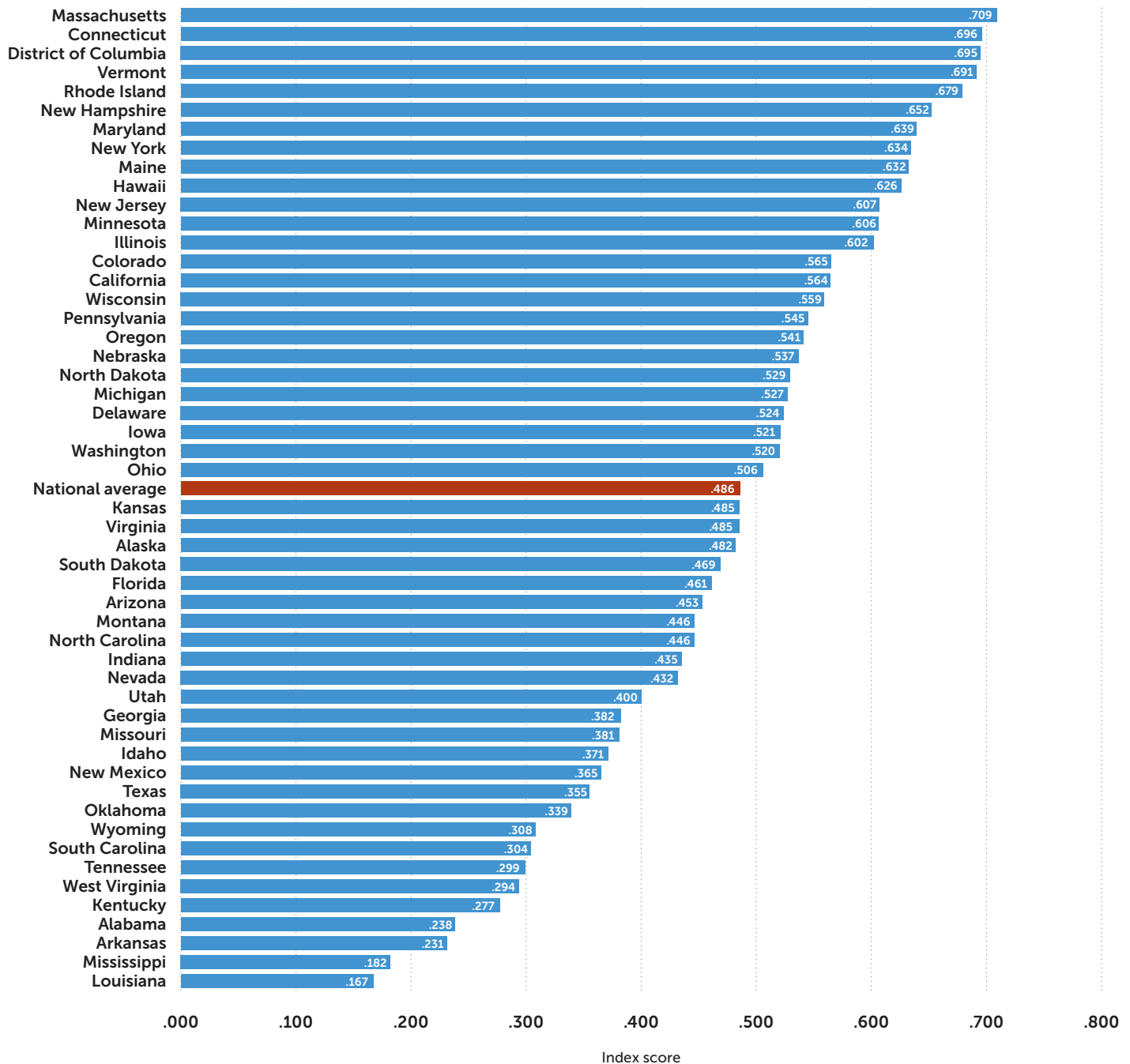
Notes

1. IWPR 2020a.
2. Hernandez 2018.
3. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
4. Klugman et al. forthcoming.
5. Bigio and Verveer 2020.

Sixth, there are clear patterns in regional performance. For example, all 6 states in the Northeast region are among the 10 best performing states nationally, while all 5 of the worst performing states are in the Southeast region.¹⁸ Yet location is not a sole determinant: there are major differences within regions. Thus, while Colorado ranks 14th overall, its neighbors, Utah and Wyoming, rank 36th and 43rd.

Seventh, women face serious justice and security constraints:

- In 37 states, domestic abusers subject to protective orders are not required to relinquish firearms.
- In 44 states, there is no legislated minimum wage above the low-income threshold.¹⁹
- In 17 states, including Arizona, Arkansas, and Idaho, at least one in three men believe that it is better for men

FIGURE 1.2 State rankings on the US index, 2020

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates.

to be the breadwinner while women tend to the home, revealing adverse norms that obstruct women's economic opportunities.²⁰

- In 17 states, fewer than half of women feel safe walking alone at night within a mile of their neighborhood.²¹

Finally, money matters, with state per capita GDP associated with better index scores. Nonetheless, some states do far better on the US WPS Index—or far worse—than their per

capita income rank, suggesting that money is not the whole story. For example, Maine ranks 44th in per capita GDP but 9th on the index—a 35-place gap. Wyoming, on the other hand, ranks 34 places lower on the index than its GDP per capita rank (see statistical table 3).

We now briefly describe the new index and key aspects of the method of construction and value-added before providing a spotlight of the three best and the three worst performing states.

Why adopt a multidimensional approach?

To assess women's status, we could focus on a specific indicator—such as differences across states in women's economic opportunities or in rates of violence against women. But it can be misleading to focus on one or another number because it is now universally acknowledged that well-being is multidimensional: education is important, but so are economic opportunities and security at home and in the community. These multiple dimensions are interconnected, and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies. This insight is often associated with Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, and the concept has been popularized in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Reports and elaborated on by economists, philosophers, and development practitioners. We also know that high achievements in one dimension do not guarantee success in other spheres of life. Multidimensional indices are a valuable way to capture and synthesize complex information into a single score that can be readily understood.

Similarly, national averages conceal substantial variations in achievement across a country, especially large countries. So, GIWPS decided to construct a multidimensional index of women's well-being for the United States, covering all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

A primary goal of this index is to accelerate progress by establishing a baseline against which to highlight achievements and benefits and monitor change, bringing partners together around an agenda for women's inclusion, justice, and security. It highlights key deficits as well as achievements, points toward priorities, and can inform more effective partnerships and collaboration.

What is the new US index?

The US index captures important aspects of women's autonomy and empowerment as agents at home, in the community, and in the economy and society.

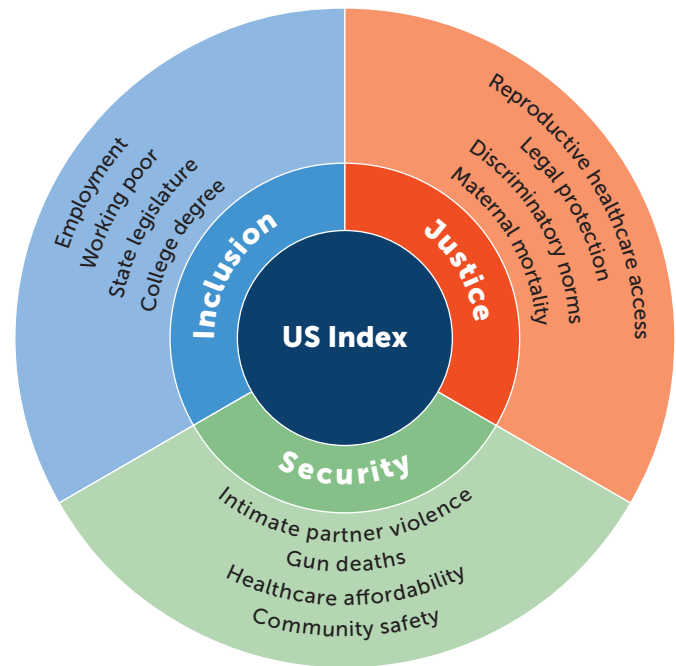
The US index is structured around the same three basic dimensions of well-being as the global index: inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal laws and informal discrimination); and security (at the individual and community levels; figure 1.3). The index and its 12 indicators, grouped into these three dimensions, provide a standardized, quantitative, and transparent measure for ranking all states.

Indicators and methods

Any index requires choices about indicators, data sources, and data aggregation. The appendix outlines the normalization and aggregation procedures used to construct the index, which have been informed by the policy and academic literature on composite indices.²²

To keep the index as simple and transparent as possible, strict selection criteria were applied (box 1.2), coupled with consultations with experts. The final indicators and their associated rationale are outlined in table 1.1; summary statistics are in statistical table 3.

FIGURE 1.3 The US Women, Peace, and Security Index: Three dimensions and 12 indicators



Note: For definitions of indicators see table 1.1 and appendix.
Source: Authors.

BOX 1.2 Selection criteria for indicators in the US index

1. *Actionability.* Data are deeply relevant to women's well-being, and results are actionable by policy-makers and civil society.
2. *Data availability.* Data are timely, and ideally, representative data are available for each state.
3. *Data quality and transparency.* Data represent widely agreed-on measures for the topic and are derived from official national sources and other credible institutions, such as the United States Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Guttmacher Institute.
4. *Statistical comparability and adequacy.* Data are collected and processed in a statistically reliable way without large or frequent revisions.

Choosing indicators requires dealing with data constraints. This is especially so in the sphere of women and security, where data are particularly scarce. For two indicators—discriminatory norms and community safety—we use the regional average from the General Social Survey for the state scores.²³

TABLE 1.1 The United States Women, Peace, and Security Index: Dimensions, indicators, and rationale

Dimension and indicator	Definition	Rationale
Inclusion		
Employment	Percentage of women ages 16 and older who are employed in full-time work (35+ hours per week)	Participation in employment captures economic opportunities and is central to realizing women's capabilities.
Working poor	Percentage in poverty among women who worked 27 weeks or more in the past 12 months	Earning below a living wage is a major obstacle to the prospects of millions of Americans and their families.
State legislature	Percentage of seats held by women in both chambers of the state legislature	Political representation is key to inclusion and ensuring that women's needs are heard and met.
College degree	Percentage of women ages 25 and older with a bachelor's degree	Higher education is a gateway to economic opportunities and independence.
Justice		
Reproductive healthcare access	Percentage of women ages 15–44 living in a county with a clinic that provides abortion services	Proximity to clinics providing abortion services enables women to exercise their right to choose.
Legal protection	Summary score based on whether state law provides the seven protections shown in figure 1.4 and statistical table 2	Key laws are needed to realize protection from violence, economic opportunities, and reproductive healthcare access.
Discriminatory norms	Percentage of men ages 18 and older who agree with the statement: "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family"	An important manifestation of gender discrimination is a lack of male support for women engaging equally in economic opportunities and work outside the home.
Maternal mortality	Number of deaths from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy per 100,000 live births	Maternal mortality is a key indicator of women's access to healthcare and the responsiveness of the healthcare system to their needs.
Security		
Intimate partner violence	Percentage of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months	Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls is a prerequisite of women's health, safety, and freedom.
Gun deaths	Number of women who died from gun-related homicides or suicides in the past year per 100,000 women	Living free of the risk of gun violence is essential to individual and community well-being.
Healthcare affordability	Percentage of women who reported being able to see a doctor in the past 12 months without financial constraint	High costs obstruct access to critical healthcare services for some Americans.
Community safety	Percentage of women ages 18 and older who are not afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of their neighborhood	Security and safety in the community affect women's mobility and opportunities in society.

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources and dates and appendix for detailed definitions and the methodology for calculating the US index.

Source: Authors.

In the absence of an existing metric for state-level legal protections for women, we created a new composite measure based on seven key questions outlined in figure 1.4. States scored one for each question if the law exists, and zero if not, for a total possible score of seven. Six states—Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Utah—scored zero, and Oregon scored best with a score of

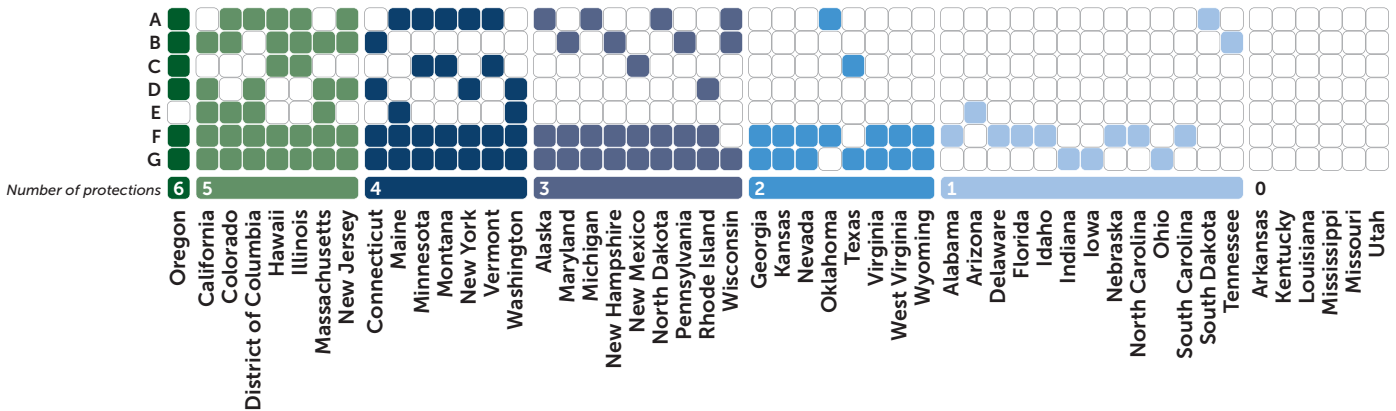
six out of seven. Analysis of the results is provided in chapter 3.

Designing the index has exposed key data constraints. While the US Census Bureau, Guttmacher Institute, the General Social Survey, and several other organizations are excellent sources of data that are representative at the state level and regularly updated, there are some key gaps, as outlined in box 1.3.

FIGURE 1.4 No state offers full legal protections of women's rights; some offer none

Does state law:

- A. Protect workers from sexual harassment, regardless of company size?
 B. Require the relinquishment of firearms from abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders?
 C. Guarantee unemployment benefits to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking?
 D. Mandate paid parental leave?
 E. Set minimum wage above the low-income threshold of \$12/hour?
 F. Allow abortion without state-mandated in-person counseling?
 G. Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment?



Note: Higher scores indicate more extensive legal protection. See statistical table 2 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates.

BOX 1.3 Missing data and the importance of closing gaps

Recent, high-quality data are essential to understand the current status of women and to inform policy. While data have become more available in recent years, there are large gaps, highlighting the need for more and better data. Here we highlight some of the largest blind spots.

Old and incomplete data on intimate partner violence. The most recent state-level data on intimate partner violence are almost a decade old, collected between 2010 and 2012. Even then, intimate partner violence rates for 17 states are missing. Moreover, data are not available by race/ethnicity.

Sparse racial data across several indicators. Available data are shown in statistical table 4, but there are many gaps. For example, maternal mortality rates are missing in 47 states for Native American women, in 43 states for Asian women, in 34 states for Hispanic women, and in 22 states for Black

women. We know that nationally women of color are at a higher risk of maternal mortality—Black and Native American women are two to three times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than white women.¹⁸¹

Data for Asian American and Native American women are sparse for all indicators. In some cases, data are missing and in others the sample sizes at the state level are too small to be statistically reliable.

Other gaps. For example, data have not been collected on the share of women in each state with access to a shelter, a key indication of women's security and ability to leave an abusive relationship. State-level data on women's earnings are also lacking, and measures of financial inclusion are limited to the household level, so we do not know the share of women with access to their own bank account, an important measure of agency.

While more and better data are needed to comprehensively measure the status of all American women, the US WPS index offers a valuable snapshot of women's well-being across the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Value added of the index

The US WPS Index introduced in this report is unique among indices on both the gender and the security fronts. There

are many state-level indices and rankings for the United States—not focused on gender differences—on the quality of public education, the ease of doing business, and so on.²⁴ WalletHub's "Best and Worst States for Women's Equality" ranking does focus on women's achievements, but it concentrates mainly on inclusion, such as whether women complete university or are in paid work.²⁵ IWPR's *The Status of Women in the States* grades and ranks states in six topic areas but was

"When everyone is treated with dignity and respect. When laws are enforced equally between genders. When people doing the same job get the same pay. When parental leave is mandatory for all businesses. When politicians stop attacking women's family planning rights."

**—Black woman from Maryland, age 39,
on what gender equality looks like to her**

last fully updated in 2015,²⁶ while the US WPS Index newly covers several aspects of women's status and well-being, especially in the justice and security dimensions.

Several innovative features set the US WPS Index apart from existing indices that have been estimated at the state level in the United States:

- *Focus on justice and security.* The US WPS Index explicitly incorporates a security dimension, which includes the current incidence of intimate partner violence against women and girls, women's perceptions of safety in their community, women's deaths from firearm-related homicides and suicides, and healthcare affordability.
- *Absolute measurements.* Most gender indices focus on gender gaps and are thereby restricted to indicators that can be measured separately for men and women. The US WPS Index uses absolute levels, which enables the incorporation of indicators such as intimate partner violence and

discriminatory norms. This also avoids misleading results in contexts where low levels of achievement characterize both men and women.

- *Simplicity.* The US WPS index has 12 equally weighted indicators. The number of indicators in other US gender indices ranges from 24 in Wallet-hub's ranking to 36 in IWPR's ranking.
- *Up to date.* With the exception of one indicator (intimate partner violence), all data have been collected since 2017, providing a recent snapshot of women's well-being.
- *Current insights.* Our analysis is enriched by our August 2020 nationally representative survey, which oversampled the top and bottom performing states and Black and Latinx women (see spotlight 2 at the end of chapter 2).²⁷

The multidimensional approach of the index is especially important for women. For example, economic opportunities are undoubtedly important, but they are incomplete in the absence of justice and security. Likewise, traditional measures of security include an array of indicators such as firearm fatalities, child abuse, and domestic violence, but they typically ignore other systematic bias and discrimination against women and girls, such as discriminatory norms that limit women's opportunities and threaten their safety in the community and in the workplace.

We conclude chapter 1 with spotlight 1, which profiles the three best performing and the three worst performing states.

Our new national survey finds that four in five Americans believe that it is important for elected officials to work on issues affecting gender equality, and two in three adults believe that the country would be better off with more women in political office and that access to abortion is an important part of women's rights and equality.

SPOTLIGHT 1 Profiles of the three best and three worst performing states

Massachusetts, Connecticut, and the District of Columbia are the best performers for women's well-being and equality, while Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas represent the worst (figure S1.1). Here we dive deeper into the profiles of these states, examining the factors that determined their rank.

Best performers

Massachusetts—Rank: 1 Index score: .709

Massachusetts leads the index rankings nationally and performs well across all three dimensions. The maternal mortality rate, about 14 deaths per 100,000 live births, is second best in the country, behind only Alaska. Gun violence against women is also low, with less than 1 woman per every 100,000 women dying from firearm-related homicides or suicides. Massachusetts is also among the five top performing states for women's college completion, access to affordable healthcare, and share of working poor.

Why residents think Massachusetts performs best:

"We have many women in government at both state and local levels. Community outreach is critical in the more disadvantaged areas. With some of the best universities and hospitals in the world, women have opportunities that others may not have."—white woman, age 53

"Because Massachusetts is very open to diversity and gives opportunity to the people."—Latinx woman, age 36

Recent legislative reforms have narrowed gender gaps, especially in the workplace. In 2018, the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act was passed as part of a broader campaign to ensure equal compensation for equal work across the state. The law prohibits employers from asking applicants about their salary history, a practice that has been shown to perpetuate the gender pay gap. Since 2015, the Boston Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement has trained over 8,500 women in salary negotiation workshops.¹ Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that 94 percent of women respondents in Massachusetts consider it important that elected officials work on issues concerning women's rights—above the national average of 42 percent—signaling strong constituent support.

However, the status of women in Massachusetts varies greatly across racial and ethnic groups. Nearly half (45 percent) of white women have a bachelor's degree, but only a quarter of Black women do (see statistical table 4). Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that in August 2020, two in five women of color in Massachusetts had less than \$200 in savings, and 36 percent reported not having enough money to pay for bills and basic needs, such as housing. And Latinx women still make only 51 cents for every dollar paid to white men in the state.²

Connecticut—Rank: 2 Index score: .696

Connecticut scores among the 10 best performing states on all three dimensions, with especially strong performance on inclusion and security. The share of working women in poverty is fourth lowest in the country. Rates of healthcare affordability and maternal health are among the 10 best nationally, signaling strong access to healthcare overall. Reproductive rights are also protected, with 95 percent of women living in a county with an abortion provider. When respondents were asked in our YouGov/PerryUndem survey why they think that their state does well on women's status, 27 percent of respondents in Connecticut and Massachusetts attributed success to state politics that are conducive to women's rights, and 20 percent noted high levels of education.

When asked why her home state of Connecticut ranks at the top for women's well-being, a 50-year-old Latinx woman said,

"We are diverse, forward-thinking, value education, and value our fellow citizens."

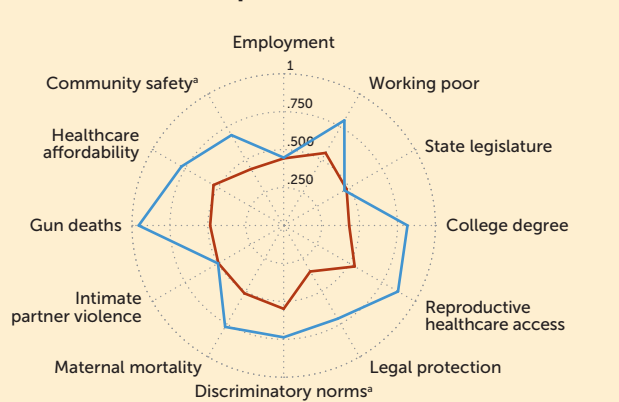
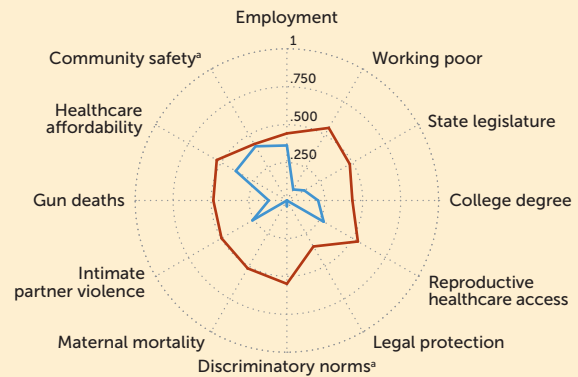
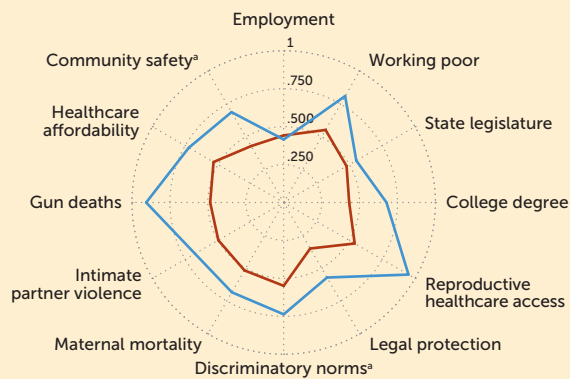
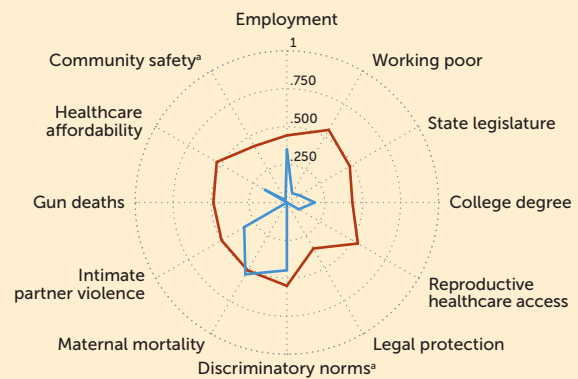
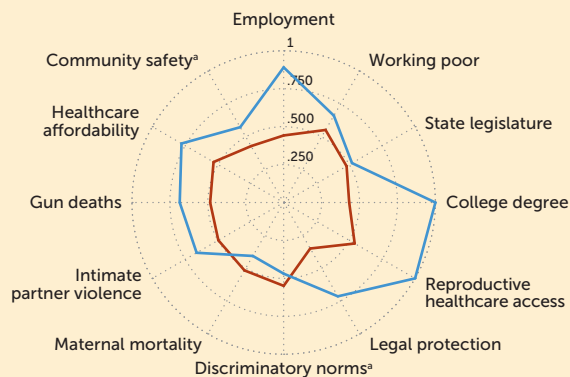
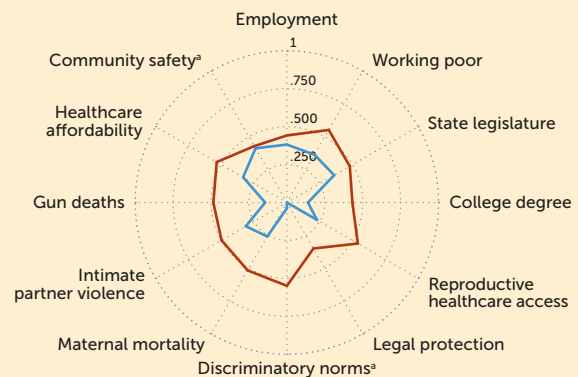
Along with other states in New England, Connecticut scores well on discriminatory norms, with only about one in five men agreeing that it's best for men to be the main breadwinner while women take care of the home, compared with a national average of 28 percent. However, our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found gender gaps in perceptions in Connecticut, as elsewhere in the United States: 58 percent of women respondents in the state believe that access to abortion is very important to women's rights, compared with only a quarter of men respondents.

More than half of Connecticut's high-level officials and administrators are women, surpassing the national average of 44 percent, and full-time working women in the state average earnings slightly higher than men.³ Still, our recent survey found that two-thirds of women in the state agree that men have more opportunities than women in getting a good job. Racial disparities are also stark: 87 percent of the state's women legislators are white, and Black women in the state earn only 57 cents for every dollar paid to white men.⁴ Similarly, only 10 percent of Black women have completed college, compared with 43 percent of white women.

"Connecticut has more elected officials, usually Democrats, that acknowledge there is still work to be done to improve women's rights and listen to women on how to systemically improve these rights."

—white man, age 26

(continued)

SPOTLIGHT 1 Profiles of the three best and three worst performing states (continued)**Figure S1.1 Performance of the best and worst performing states across the dozen indicators****Three best performers****Massachusetts—First place****Three worst performers****Louisiana—last place****Connecticut—Second place****Mississippi—Second to last place****District of Columbia—Third place****Arkansas—Third to last place**

a. State-level data were not available, so state scores were imputed from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.

Note: Indicator scores are normalized for comparison, with 1 being the best score and 0 the worst score for all indicators. The national average values are weighted. See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates.

SPOTLIGHT 1 Profiles of the three best and three worst performing states *(continued)*

Figure S1.2 Respondents from Massachusetts and Connecticut attribute strong performance on the index largely to education and progressive politics

Response to the question: “Massachusetts/Connecticut is rated as one of the best in the country for women’s rights and gender equality. Why do you think your state is at the top?”



Note: Words in larger text correspond to more frequent responses.
Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

Figure S1.2 captures the most common themes of YouGov/PerryUndem survey respondents in Connecticut and Massachusetts, with words in larger text corresponding to more frequent responses.

District of Columbia—Rank: 3 Index score: .695

The District of Columbia’s strong index performance is driven by positive outcomes across the board. It is the top scorer for the inclusion dimension, achieving the highest rates of female employment (57 percent) and college completion (58 percent) nationally. Other notable achievements include widespread access to healthcare, with fewer than 10 percent of women reporting not seeing a doctor in the

past year because of cost, placing the District of Columbia among the top five performers nationally for this indicator. The District of Columbia is also the only place in the country where all women live in close proximity to an abortion provider, though its area is much smaller than that of any of the states.

Women’s well-being is reinforced by strong legal protections. The District of Columbia is among a handful of states that protect all workers from workplace sexual harassment regardless of company size and that guarantee paid parental leave. The hourly minimum wage, at \$15, is also the highest in the country, boosting economic security for women and their families.

Yet major racial disparities characterize the District of Columbia. While 90 percent of white women have a bachelor’s degree, only 27 percent of Black women do. And employment among white women is the highest in the country at 74 percent, boosting the District’s average, but employment rates for Black women put it among the worst 10 performers nationally on that indicator. Maternal mortality rates for Black women—71 deaths per 100,000 live births—are double the District’s average and higher than rates for white women in any state.

Worst performers

Louisiana—Rank: 51 Index score: .167

Louisiana performs below average on all 12 indicators and ranks worst overall on the justice dimension. Discriminatory norms limit women’s progress, as nearly half of men in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas believe it’s best for men to be the breadwinner while women stay home. Maternal mortality rates are the highest in the country, at 72 deaths per 100,000 live births, and nearly three-quarters of women live in a county without an abortion provider. Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that only one in four white male respondents in Louisiana believe that access to abortion is very important to women’s rights, compared with nearly two in five women of color in the state. Louisiana also mandates in-person counseling for abortion followed by a 24-hour waiting period.

“This state has a long history of racism and sexism. Little has been done to bring communities together in order to understand the challenges.” —Hispanic man, age 58, on why his home state of Louisiana ranks poorly on the index

Racial disparities in health indicators are stark, with maternal mortality rates rising to 112 deaths per 100,000 live births among Black women. More than 20 percent of Hispanic and Native American women report not seeing a

(continued)

SPOTLIGHT 1 Profiles of the three best and three worst performing states (continued)

doctor recently because of cost. Our YouGov/PerryUdem survey found that half of women of color in the state do not have enough money to afford to pay their bills and meet basic needs, and 45 percent of Black women have less than \$200 in savings, compared with 30 percent of white women in the best performing states.

Louisiana is one of six states that scored zero on key legal protections for women, highlighting extensive formal barriers to equality. For example, the state does not require domestic abusers subject to protective orders to relinquish their firearms.

There are stark gender gaps in perceptions and priorities. Our YouGov/PerryUdem survey found that nearly four in five women respondents in Louisiana believe that there is still work to be done to achieve equality, compared with only one in three men. Over 80 percent of Black women say that men have more opportunities to get good jobs than women do, while only a third of white men think the same, highlighting different perceptions about equality across both gender and race.

Poverty rates for women in Louisiana soar above national averages. Nearly one in five women and 45 percent of female-headed households live in poverty, compared with 12 percent of women nationally.⁵ Because Louisiana does not have a state minimum wage, only the federal minimum hourly wage of \$7.25 applies.

Women's security is also threatened by high rates of intimate partner violence and abusers with access to a firearm: 9 percent of women experienced intimate partner violence in the past year, the fourth highest rate nationwide, and gun violence against women is nearly double the national average. These two indicators are closely related, as discussed in chapter 3. Our YouGov/PerryUdem survey found that nearly two-thirds of women of color in the state report feeling unsafe frequently or sometimes in their daily life because they are a woman, compared with 45 percent of all women in the state, underlining high levels of insecurity across the board, but especially for women of color.

Mississippi—Rank: 50 Index score: .182

Mississippi scores lowest nationally for security and falls in the bottom three for inclusion and justice. Nearly 8 women per 100,000 die from firearm-related homicides or suicides, the second highest rate in the country, behind only Wyoming. Rates of intimate partner violence are among the 10 highest in the country.

One in five women report not being able to see a doctor in the past 12 months because of cost, one of the highest rates of exclusion, alongside Georgia and Texas. Access to reproductive healthcare is also limited, with 91 percent

of women living in a county without an abortion provider. State law mandates a waiting period for women seeking abortions and requires that they receive state-directed counseling and information designed to discourage women from proceeding.

The share of working women in poverty is the second highest in the country, and only a quarter of women have a bachelor's degree. Like Louisiana, Mississippi is one of several states that score zero on legal protections for women. In addition to restrictive laws on access to reproductive healthcare, Mississippi law does not protect all workers from workplace sexual harassment and does not require domestic abusers subject to protective orders to relinquish their firearms.

Mississippi also scores poorly for women's representation in the state legislature: 86 percent of members are men. Yet there is major support for change. Our YouGov/PerryUdem survey found that 87 percent of Black men respondents in Mississippi believe that the country would be better off with more women in office, and 72 percent said that women's rights and well-being are very important in determining their vote in state elections, compared with 42 percent of all Americans. But there are divides: three quarters of Black women in the state believe that it is very important that elected officials work on issues related to women's rights, compared with 20 percent of white men.

When asked why their state performs poorly on women's well-being, 22 percent of YouGov/PerryUdem survey respondents in Louisiana and Mississippi flagged inertia and overall resistance to change. However, 17 percent said that relatively low levels of well-being are not an issue, highlighting how attitudes can obstruct progress.

"Mississippi has always struggled when it comes to equal opportunities for women, especially minority women. Perhaps this is mostly due to poor leadership and a male dominated society that had limited views when it comes to women's rights." —Black woman, age 51, on why her home state of Mississippi ranks poorly on the index

Even behind these low levels of achievement, there are stark racial disparities. Nearly a third of nonelderly Hispanic residents are uninsured while the same is true for only 13 percent of white residents.⁶ Black poverty rates are the third highest in the country, at 31 percent, compared with 12 percent for white residents.⁷ Our YouGov/PerryUdem survey found that 57 percent of Black and Latinx respondents in the state reported having less than \$200 in savings, and only 3 percent have more than \$10,000, compared with 34 percent of white men. Gaps in healthcare and poverty rates are further highlighted by greater vulnerability to

(continued)

SPOTLIGHT 1 Profiles of the three best and three worst performing states *(continued)*

COVID-19. Although 38 percent of Mississippians are Black, they account for 72 percent of COVID-19 deaths compared with 28 percent for white residents.⁸

When our YouGov/PerryUndem survey asked respondents in Mississippi and Louisiana why they thought their state ranked poorly on women's well-being, poverty and tradition were the most common themes, but conservative politics, lack of education, and racism also emerged as perceived causes (figure S1.3).

Arkansas—Rank: 49 Index score: .231

Women in Arkansas face compounding formal, informal, and intersectional barriers to well-being, resulting in poor performance on the index overall. Arkansas is among the 10 worst performing states on 9 of 12 indicators, including maternal mortality, intimate partner violence, and the share of women in the state legislature. The state has the second lowest rate of college completion, at 24 percent, and the rate for Black women is even lower, at 19 percent.

In the West South Central region of the United States, which also includes Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, almost half of men say that it is best for men to be the main breadwinner while women stay home, reflecting deeply entrenched patriarchal values that restrict women's empowerment. There are also gaps in community safety—more than four in five men in this region are not afraid to walk within a mile of their neighborhood at night, compared with fewer than three in five women.

Women in Arkansas face several obstacles to healthcare. Some 17 percent of women in the state report not seeing a doctor in the past year because of cost, a rate that spikes to 32 percent for Hispanic women (see statistical table 4). Additionally, over three-quarters of women live in a county without an abortion provider, and state law requires a 72-hour waiting period between mandatory in-person abortion counseling and the procedure. Teen pregnancy rates are the highest in the country, at 33 births per 1,000 adolescent women ages 15–19, a rate that is comparable to that in Mongolia and Morocco.⁹

Figure S1.3 Respondents in Louisiana and Mississippi most commonly attributed their state's poor performance on the index to poverty, tradition, and lack of education

Response to the question: "Louisiana/Mississippi is rated at the bottom of states for women's rights and gender equality. Why do you think your state is at the bottom?"



Note: Words in larger text correspond to more frequent responses.

Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

Notes

1. Walsh, Malia, and Murphy 2019.
2. NWLC 2020c.
3. Downes, Alkadry, and Gilman 2019.
4. NWLC 2020a.
5. NWLC 2020b.
6. KFF 2018a.
7. KFF 2018b.
8. Pettus 2020.
9. HHS, OPA 2019; World Bank 2018.

CHAPTER 2

Key results and highlights

Overall, two-thirds of Americans think that more work has to be done to achieve full equality in the United States. Women of color are much more likely to say that there is more to do.

This chapter goes behind the headlines to highlight the major results and insights from an analysis of state rankings on the US WPS Index and its dimensions and indicators.

The best and worst performing states

The 12 best performing states on the US WPS Index, from the top, are Massachusetts, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Vermont, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maryland, New York, Maine, Hawaii, New Jersey, and Minnesota (figure 2.1). Their scores are very close, though Massachusetts is the only state to exceed 0.7. Each scores well on multiple aspects, especially educational attainment, and has very low female deaths from gun violence (see statistical table 1).

The 12 worst performing states on the index, starting in last place, are Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. These states all perform poorly on each dimension and especially poorly on reproductive rights and legal protection, with Louisiana and Mississippi both falling below .2.

Regional patterns

The best performing states are concentrated in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, while the bottom performing states are clustered in the Southeast (figure 2.2; see endnote 3 for states in each region).²⁸ But geographic location is not necessarily a deciding factor of women's well-being. For example, Colorado ranks 14th while its neighbors, Utah and Wyoming,

score 36th and 43rd, respectively. Kentucky does worse than neighboring Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana—though it is similar to West Virginia and Tennessee.

Looking at the seven geographic regions, we see substantial variation in index performance both across and within regions (figure 2.3). The range is largest in the Southeast, with Louisiana trailing both the region and the country, whereas Virginia ranks 26th and scores around the national average. In the Midwest, Minnesota ranks 12th nationwide, while neighboring Missouri scores in the second worst quintile overall, largely due to poor access to reproductive healthcare, weak legal protections, and high rates of maternal mortality.

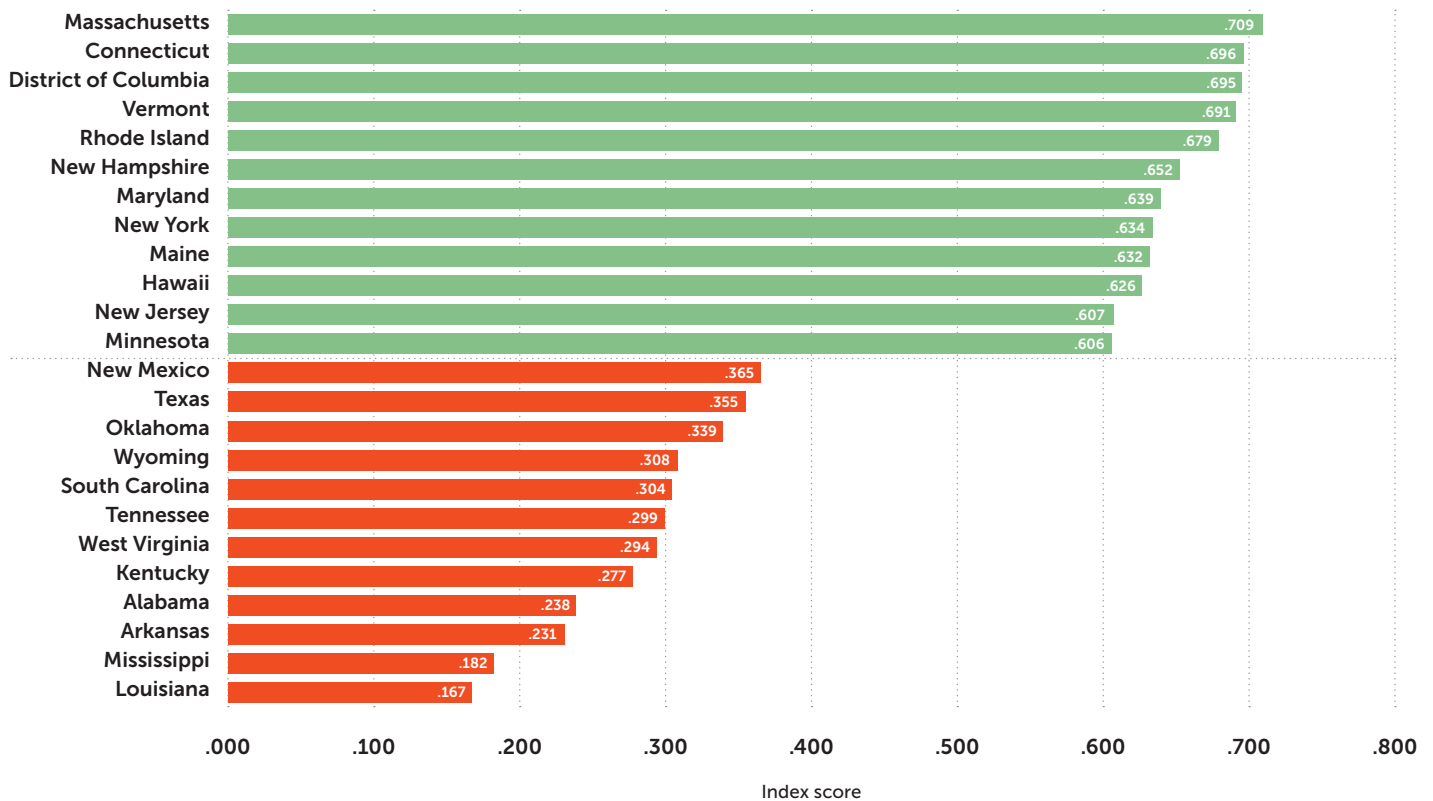
"Women having the right to choose for themselves and achieve their goals socially and economically and without living in fear that her gender affects her choices."

*—Black woman from Colorado, age 37,
on what gender equality looks like to her*

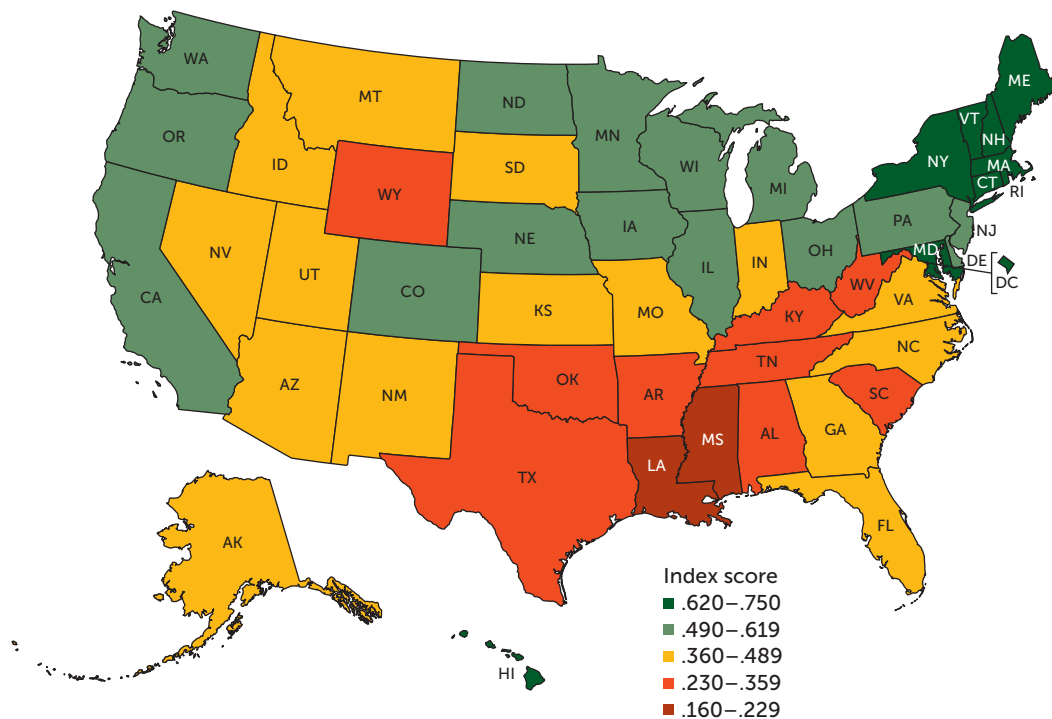
Explaining variations in performance

Such massive variation across states raises the obvious question—why? What explains which states do so much better than others and which do so much worse?

Some states do far better on the US WPS Index—or far worse—than their per capita income rank (figure 2.4; see statistical table 3). Maine ranks 35 places higher on the index than on per capita income and performs well across all three

FIGURE 2.1 The dozen best and worst performing states on the US index, 2020

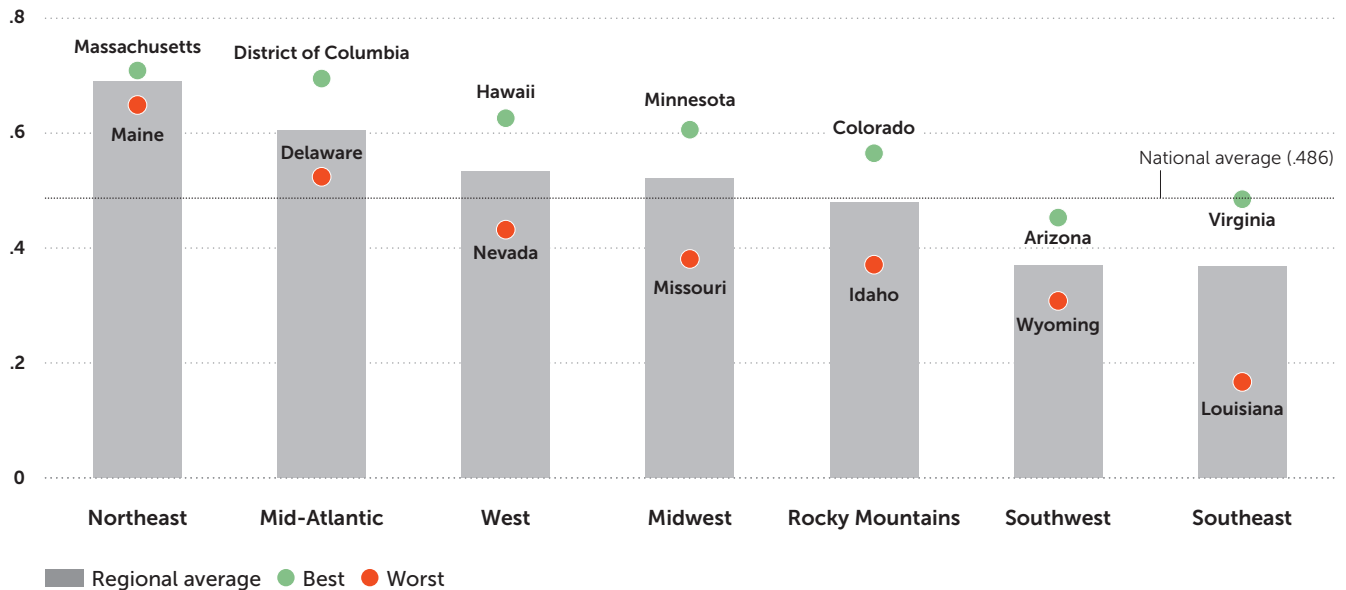
Note: Possible index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.
 Source: Authors' estimates.

FIGURE 2.2 A spectrum of index scores, 2020

Note: Possible index scores range from a low of 0 (dark red) to a high of 1 (dark green). See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.
 Source: Authors' estimates.

FIGURE 2.3 Regional variation in index performance, 2020

Index score



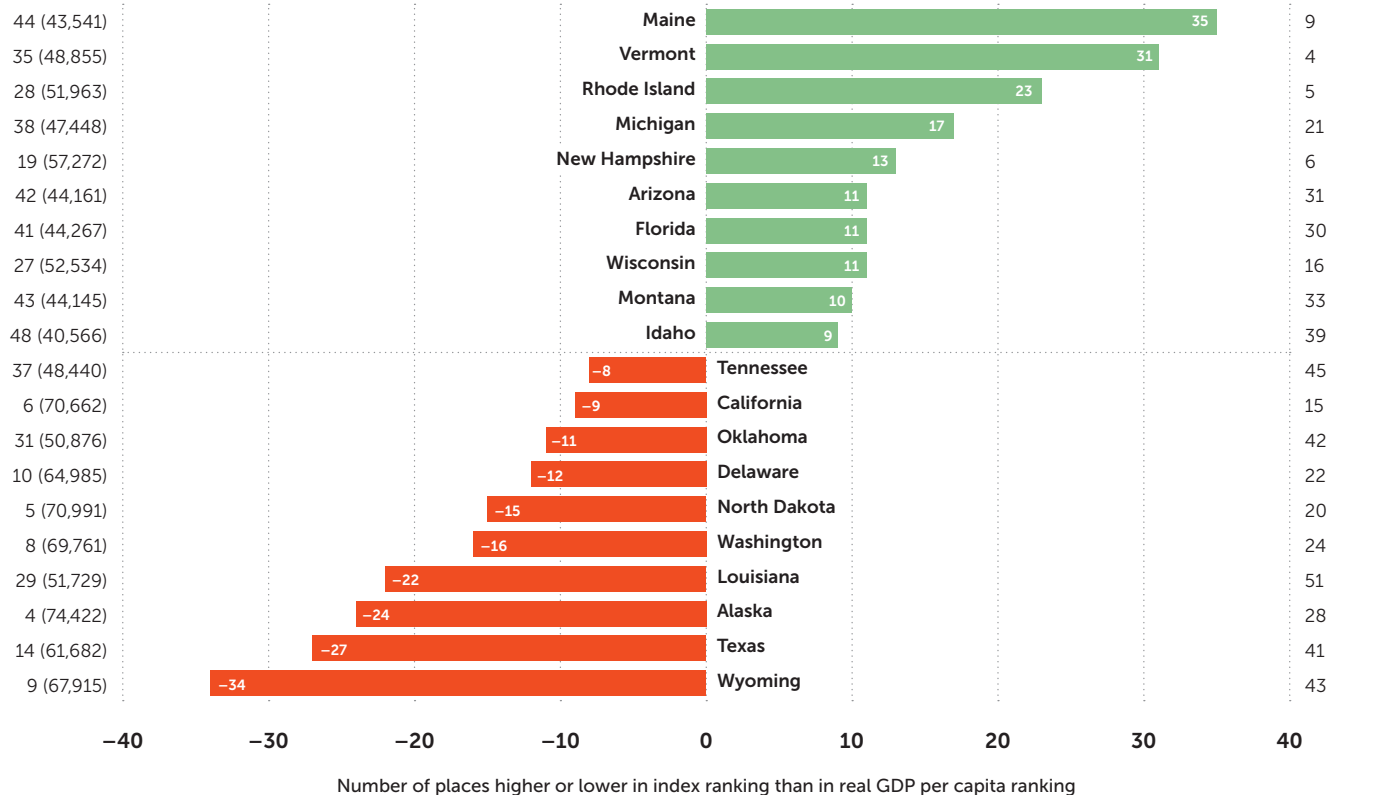
Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores and endnote 3 for states in each region.

Source: Authors' estimates.

FIGURE 2.4 Some states fare much better and others much worse in their index rank compared with their rank on per capita income, 2020

GDP rank (per capita GDP, \$)

Index rank



Note: Green indicates a state's gain in the US index ranking relative to its rank in GDP per capita; red indicates a loss. See statistical table 3 for full rank differences across all states.

Source: Authors' estimates.

dimensions of the index. Wyoming stands out with a rank 34 places lower on the index than on its per capita income ranking because it performs so poorly on justice and security—96 percent of women live in a county without access to an abortion provider, and the rates of female deaths from gun violence are the highest in the country, at nearly nine firearm-related deaths per 100,000 women.

Using a multiple linear regression model to conduct a multivariate analysis, we investigated the quantitative relationships between a state's US WPS Index score and a set of factors expected to explain its performance (the full set of explanatory variables and data are in statistical table 3).²⁹ Because the sample of states is not large (51 outcomes), the model was kept simple to avoid overspecification. The explanatory factors were state income and state government spending (both per capita), the urban share of the population, racial diversity, and the number of years government positions (governor and majorities in both houses of the legislature) were held by Democrats.³⁰

All the variables were statistically significant, except state government spending per capita (table 2.1). The coefficient values signify how much the average index score changes due to a one-unit shift in the explanatory variables while other variables in the model are held constant.

The key drivers of state performance that emerge are:

- *Wealthier states perform better.* Income is logged, meaning that a 1 percent increase in GDP per capita can be interpreted as boosting the average index score by .27 points.
- *States with greater racial diversity tend to have poorer performance.* Racial diversity scores measure the representation of six racial and ethnic groups in each state, with higher scores indicating greater diversity.³¹ A 1 point higher racial diversity score is associated with a .24-point lower average index score. This is not surprising, since socioeconomic inequalities in the United States are both racialized and

gendered.³² Black and Latinx women have the lowest earnings, face the most intense occupational segregation, and have the highest poverty rates.³³

- *However, state-level public policies also lead to substantial variance in women's socioeconomic positions that differ by race/ethnicity.* For example, paid parental leave, mandated only in nine states, is especially important for households of color.³⁴ Black and Latinx parents are less likely to be able to afford unpaid time off.
- *Urban share of the population is positively correlated with the US WPS Index.* A 1 percentage point higher urban share of the population is associated with a .004 point higher index score. Overall, living in cities and towns is associated with better access to services and infrastructure, including opportunities to engage in paid employment.³⁵
- *Democratic Party control of the state government is associated with better performance.* Because the Democratic Party tends to have policies more attuned to women's priorities and gender equality,³⁶ every additional year that the Democratic Party controlled the state since 2000 is associated with a .006 point higher average US WPS Index score. Since the 1980s, a gender gap in party identification has been evident, with more women than men voting for Democrats.³⁷ The focus on gender equality by Democratic state administrations is consistent with what Democratic voters want. Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that 93 percent of Democrats believe that it is very important that elected officials work on gender equality issues, compared with 65 percent of Republicans (spotlight 2). Note that the significance of this variable contrasts with the nonsignificance of state spending per capita, so the positive results for Democratic governments were not also associated with higher public spending.

"We are a democratic trifecta, and Democrats tend to value women's rights and gender equality more."

—Asian woman from Connecticut, age 20, on why her home state ranks well on women's well-being.

These results are important, even if this investigation cannot rigorously establish causality for US WPS index scores, which would require further investigations over time and controls for confounding factors.

Mixed performance across indicators

Good things often go together—10 states and the District of Columbia score in the top two quintiles for all three dimensions, mutually reinforcing aspects of well-being. But few states perform uniformly well or poorly across all 12 indicators, even most of the dozen best performing states. This underlines the importance of measuring women's well-being multidimensionally, as states that score highly in some areas may lag behind in others. For example, top-ranking Massachusetts has middling scores for employment, women's legislative representation, and intimate partner violence, while

TABLE 2.1 Factors influencing state index scores

Explanatory variable	Coefficient
Log of GDP per capita	0.266** (0.126)
Racial diversity	-0.238*** (0.0815)
Urban share	0.00392** (0.00182)
State expenditure per capita	< -0.0001 (< -0.0001)
State control by Democrats	0.00639** (0.00314)
Number of observations	51
Adjusted R-squared	.427

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

Source: Authors' estimates. See statistical table 4 for variable definitions and data.

second-ranking Connecticut performs poorly on women's employment and the District of Columbia does poorly on maternal mortality and community safety. New Jersey scores well across the board for inclusion, but has the fourth worst rate of maternal mortality nationwide.

"Traffic lights" visualize good (green), middling (yellow), and bad (red) performance across the indicators (figure 2.5). New Hampshire is the only state that scores in the top two quintiles for all 12 indicators. Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana score in the bottom two quintiles for all indicators.

For many indicators, there is a wide range of performance across states (figure 2.6). Variability is especially high for all four indicators in the justice dimension. Most notably:

- The variability in access to reproductive healthcare within the county of residence ranges from 100 percent in the District of Columbia to 4 percent in Wyoming.
- Roughly half of men in the West South Central region (see statistical table 1 note c for states in each region) believe that it is best for men to be the breadwinner while women take care of the home, compared with 28 percent nationally and a low of 15 percent in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Intimate partner violence and working poor exhibited the least variation across states. Even so, the state with the highest incidence of intimate partner violence—South Carolina, at 11 percent—is about 51 percent higher than the national mean and nearly 7 percentage points higher than Rhode Island, the state with the lowest incidence. The range between highest and lowest rates of working poor is about 8 percentage points; the national average is 6 percent.

Correlations between dimensions

It is interesting to observe correlations at the state level between pairs of dimensions: inclusion and justice, inclusion and security, and justice and security (figure 2.7). States in the upper right quadrant in the three panels have higher levels of achievement on the two dimensions shown, whereas states in the bottom left quadrant have lower levels of achievement.

There are 20 states in the bottom left quadrant on all three pairwise comparisons,³⁸ and Mississippi ranks in the bottom five on all three pairs of dimensions. Nine states and the District of Columbia are in the top right quadrant on all three pairs of dimensions.

While the general pattern is that the dimensions are all positively associated with each other, there are notable exceptions. Nevada, for example, is among the 15 best performing states on the inclusion dimension but falls to the bottom 5 on security. Nevada leads the country in women's representation in the state legislature yet has among the worst rates nationally of intimate partner violence and female gun deaths.

Key gender gaps

Data for several indicators allow estimating gender gaps—in employment, working poor, state legislature, college degree, discriminatory norms, gun deaths, and community safety

(see statistical table 5 for data on gender gaps). The largest disadvantages for women relative to men are in state legislature representation, community safety, and employment. On average across the states, men's representation in state legislatures (71 percent) surpasses women's (30 percent) by 41 percentage points. The gender gap in community safety is 23 percentage points, with 79 percent of men reporting feeling safe in their neighborhood, compared with 56 percent of women on average. In employment, men lead by 16 percentage points (59 percent against 43 percent). Perceptions of women's status also vary between men and women: our YouGov/PerryUndem survey reveals that 56 percent of men believe that women are treated with respect and dignity always or often, while only a third of women say the same.

"When women and men have equal pay for the same level of skills and experience. When top jobs have close to equal numbers of women and men. In other words, when women and men have become equals, in all respects."

*—white woman from Oregon, age 83,
when asked what gender equality looks like to her*

Feeling safe in the community is a critical element of well-being. Four in five men nationwide feel safe walking within a mile of their neighborhood at night, compared with fewer than three in five women.

Gaps are widest in the East South Central region—including in Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee—where 59 percent of women report feeling afraid while walking alone at night within a mile of their neighborhood, compared with 23 percent of men. Gender gaps in community safety are smallest in New England, yet even there, the share of men who feel safe in their neighborhood (81 percent) is 13 percentage points higher than the share of women (68 percent).

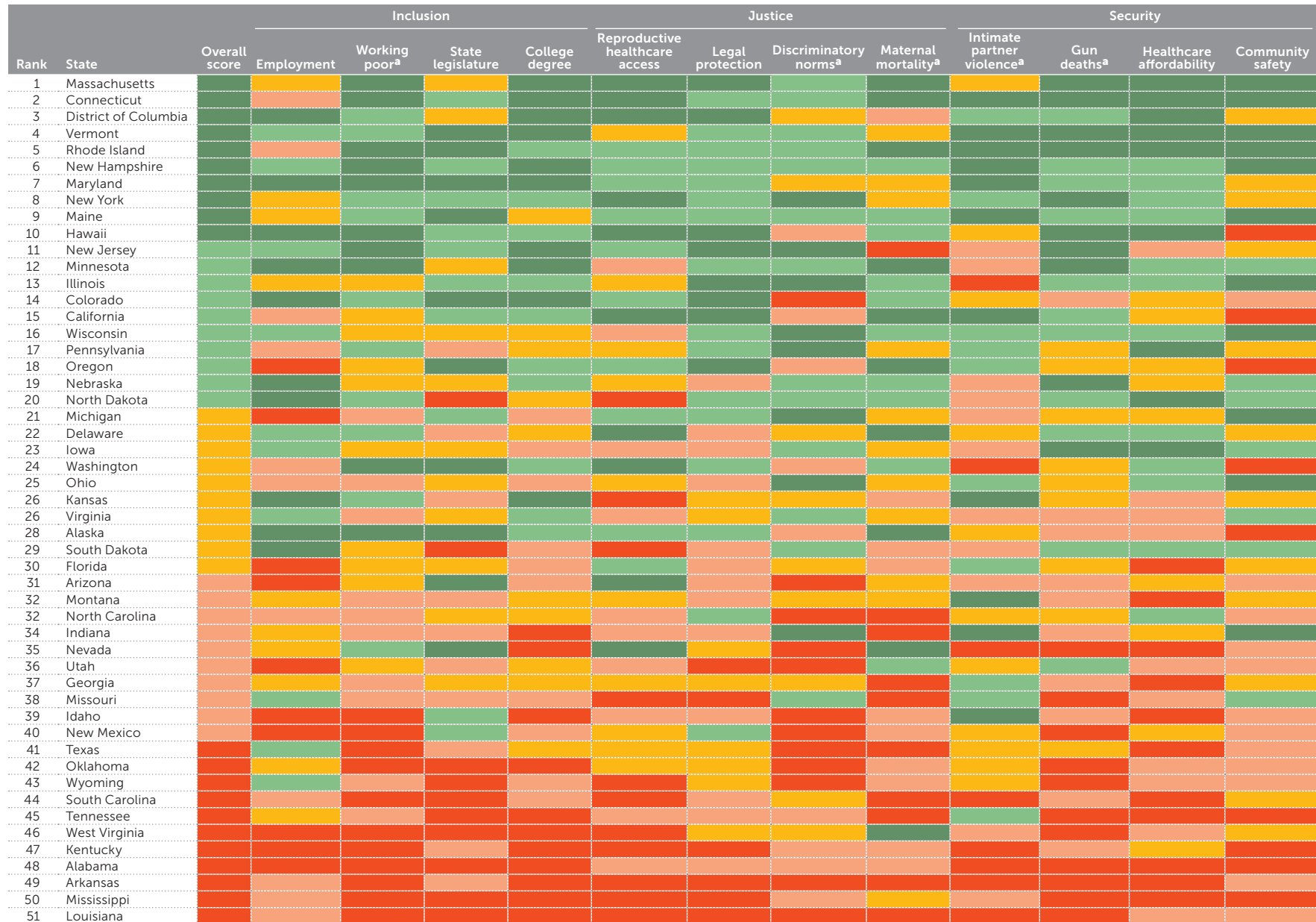
Feelings of safety also vary across racial and ethnic lines. Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that nearly three in five Latinx women say that they frequently or sometimes feel unsafe because they are a woman, compared with two in five white women.

In all states, greater shares of men than of women are employed—the gender gap averages 16 percentage points (figure 2.8). The District of Columbia is the only place where the gap is less than 10 percentage points—63 percent of men and 57 percent of women are employed. Utah has the largest gender gap, with a difference of 26 percentage points, similar to the gender gap in Kuwait.

Alongside employment gaps, women consistently earn less than men, averaging 81 cents on the dollar. This disparity with white men is even greater for women who are Black (62 cents on the dollar), Native American (57 cents), and Latinx (54 cents).³⁹ For Native American and Latinx women, these gaps translate to an average loss of more than \$1 million in lifetime earnings, affecting retirement savings and social security benefits as well.⁴⁰ Unpaid care duties are one cause

FIGURE 2.5 Traffic lights highlight uneven performance across the index indicators, 2020

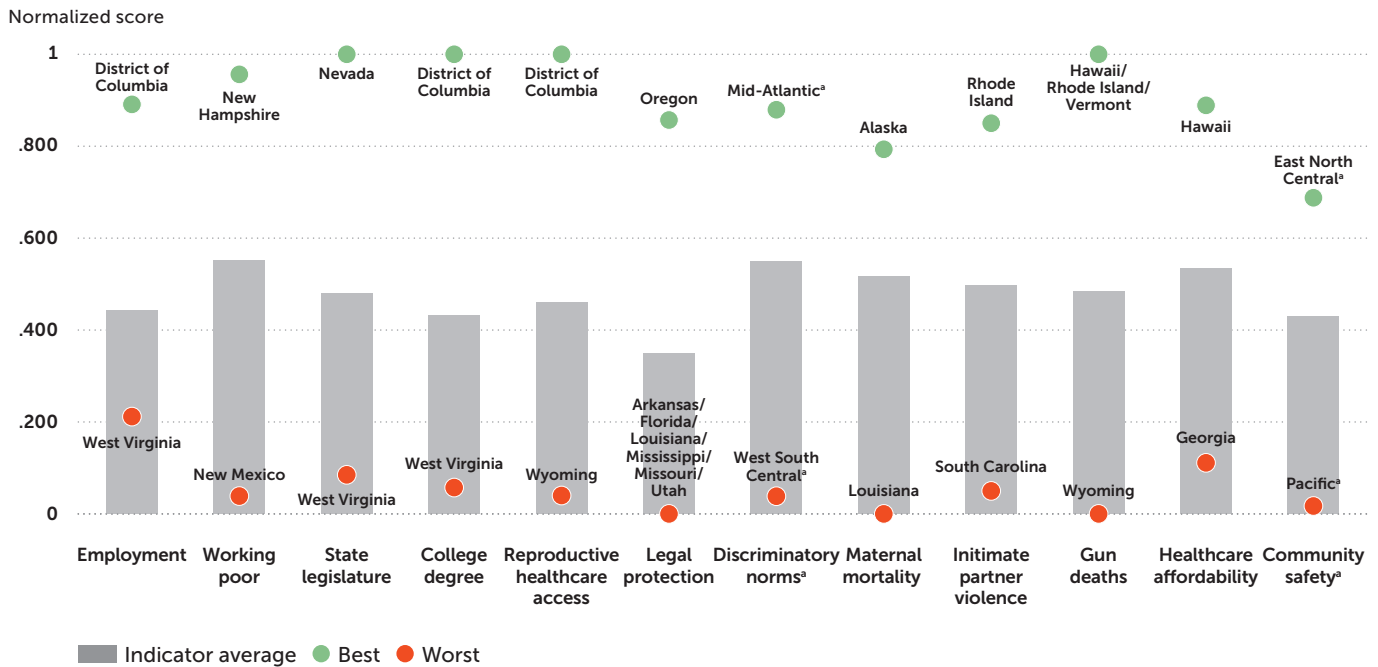
Performance by quintile for overall rank and individual indicators



Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

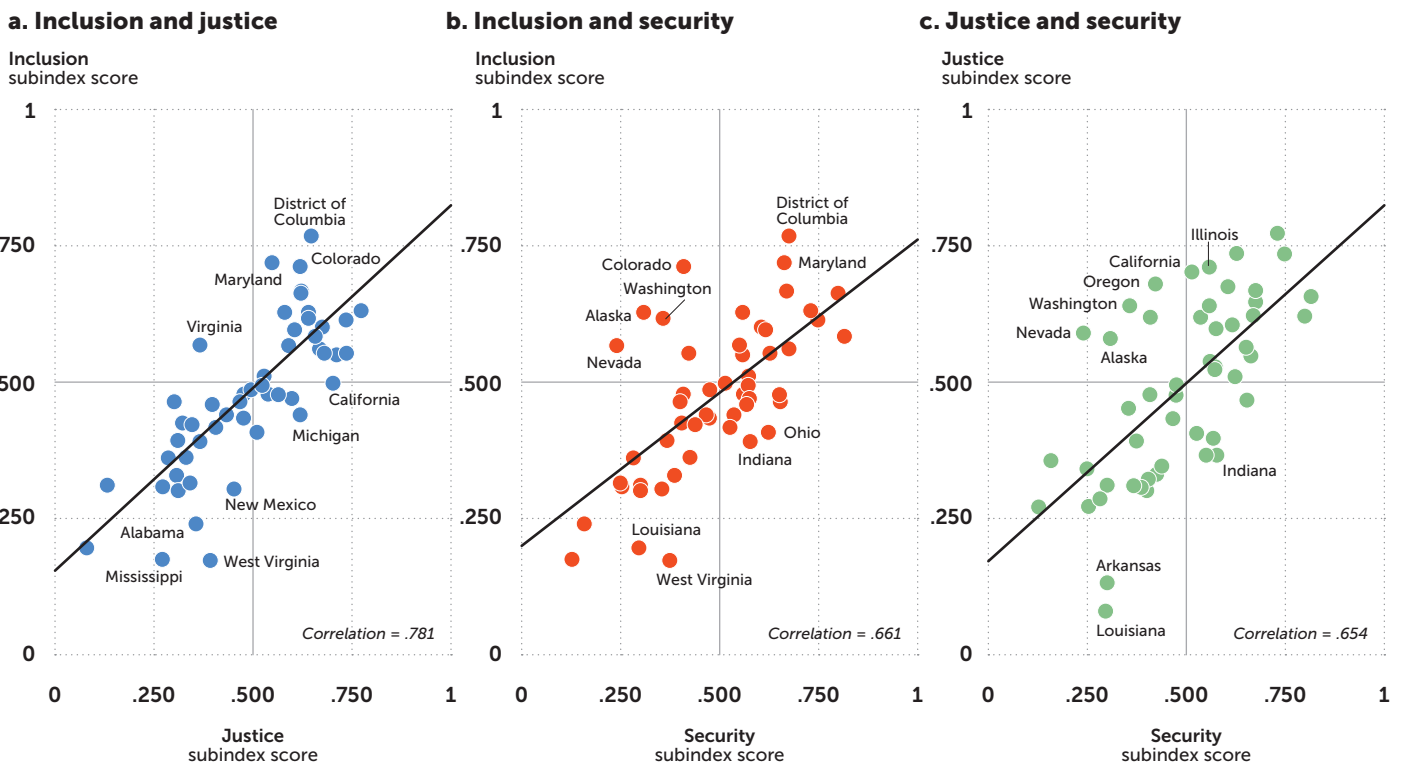
a. State-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.

Source: Authors' estimates.

FIGURE 2.6 Large variation in state performance across all 12 indicators, 2020

Note: Indicator scores are normalized for comparison, with 1 the best score and 0 the worst. Green indicates the best performers and red the worst performers. a. State-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.

Source: Authors' estimates.

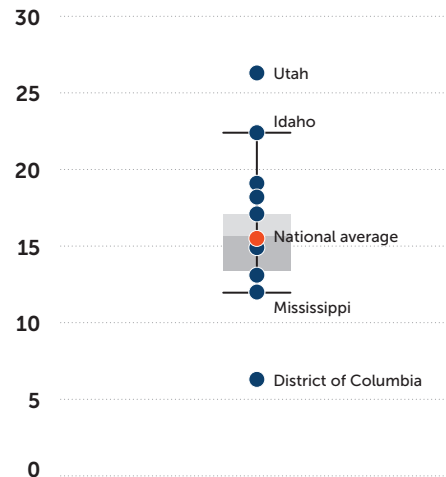
FIGURE 2.7 Bivariate correlations between the inclusion, justice, and security dimensions of the index, 2020

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates.

FIGURE 2.8 In most states, employment rates are 12–18 percentage points higher for men than for women, 2018

Gender gap (percentage points)



Note: See statistical table 5 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.
Source: Authors' estimates based on US Census Bureau data.

driving this gap, with women paying a steep price to bear and raise children. Women with one child earn 28 percent less on average than women without children, while being a father typically does not affect men's earnings.⁴¹ It is perhaps not surprising, then, that our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that nearly three in five adults—69 percent of women and 48 percent of men—think men have more opportunities for getting well-paying jobs with good benefits.

For gun deaths and college education, men are worse off. On average, men die from firearm-related homicides and suicides at a rate about six times higher than women. One reason is that men represent 86 percent of firearm suicide victims.⁴² Men are also more likely to own a gun, with 39 percent reporting ownership compared with 22 percent of

women.⁴³ In one area, however, women are more likely to be a victim of gun violence: gun-related homicides committed by an intimate partner are significantly more likely for women than men.⁴⁴

In most states, higher shares of women than men have a college degree, though their lead is typically within about 3 percentage points. And even though women have earned more college degrees than men since the 1980s and more doctoral degrees since the early 2000s, women are still paid less than men for similar work.

Even when women choose a high-paying field of study, pursue a high-paying major within the field, and get a job in a high-paying occupation, they still earn an average of 92 cents per dollar paid to men—better than the average for all jobs of 81 cents on the dollar, but still far from earnings equality.⁴⁵ Women with a master's degree average earnings similar to those of men with a bachelor's degree, highlighting the higher standards women are expected to meet in order to be seen as equals to their male counterparts.⁴⁶

"Gender equality to me looks like a community that isn't surprised when a man stays at home with the kids and his female partner remains the primary wage earner; when a woman of color can be hired for a position and offered the same benefits and pay that a white man would receive; when a person with a uterus is able to obtain the appropriate birth control options for their situation."

*—Latinx woman from Missouri, age 26,
on what gender equality looks like to her*

This chapter has highlighted key insights from our new index and results from our new survey, which together paint a picture of contrasts—across states and across genders. Spotlight 2 presents key findings from our YouGov/PerryUndem survey, which illuminates this picture, especially through the oversampling of minority racial groups and the best and worst performing states.

Most Americans see women's access to affordable birth control, abortion, livable wage jobs, equal pay, parental leave, and affordable healthcare as important components of gender equality.

SPOTLIGHT 2 Highlights from our national survey on women, peace, and security in the United States

The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security commissioned YouGov and PerryUndem to conduct a nationally representative survey in August 2020 to explore current views about the status of women's well-being in the United States, patterns across states, and the important elements of gender equality.¹

The results provide solid evidence of widespread recognition among both women and men of the challenges women face in the United States in a range of rights and opportunities—although women are more likely than men to see gaps in such key aspects as access to affordable child care, jobs that pay a living wage, and equal pay with men. Indeed, gender, race, and political affiliation manifested major differences.

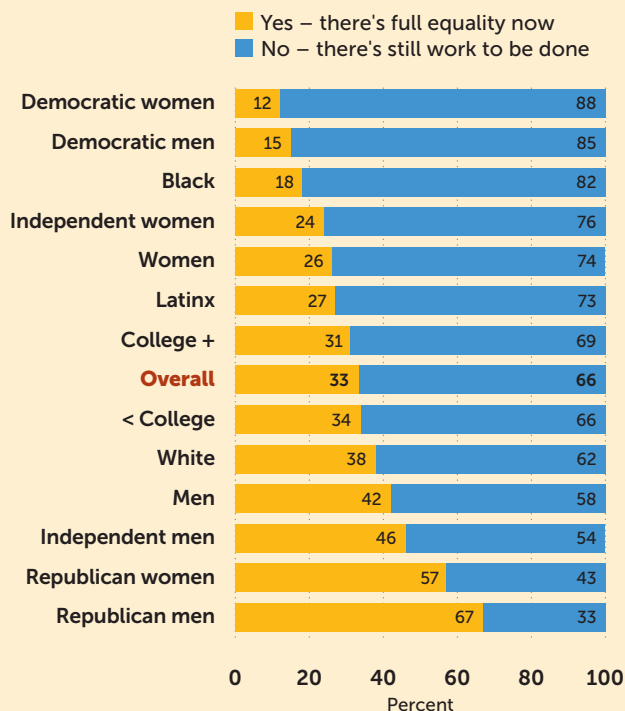
Overall, two-thirds of respondents think that more work has to be done to achieve full equality in the United States (figure S2.1). The exception is people who identify as Republican, who tend to think equality has already been achieved. Women of color were much more likely to say that there is more to do. Indeed, the gender and racial differences

in views are stark, alongside differences by party affiliation. Almost 9 in 10 women of color in Connecticut and Massachusetts as well as Black women in Louisiana and Mississippi believe that there is more work to be done—compared with almost 6 in 10 white men in Connecticut and Massachusetts and 4 in 10 white men in Louisiana and Mississippi.

When asked what gender equality looks like to them, more than 40 percent of responses were related to economic equality and the workplace, including equal pay, equal opportunities, and an absence of workplace discrimination (figure S2.2). Equal treatment and political representation also loom large.

Only one in three respondents believe that it is a “good time” to be a woman in America, and only one in four says it’s a “good time” to be a woman of color in America (figure S2.3). Only 12 percent of Black women nationally—and 17 percent in Mississippi and Louisiana—believe it is a good time to be a Black woman in their state, while one third of white women and almost half (45 percent) of white men think that it is a good time to be a Black woman in their state.

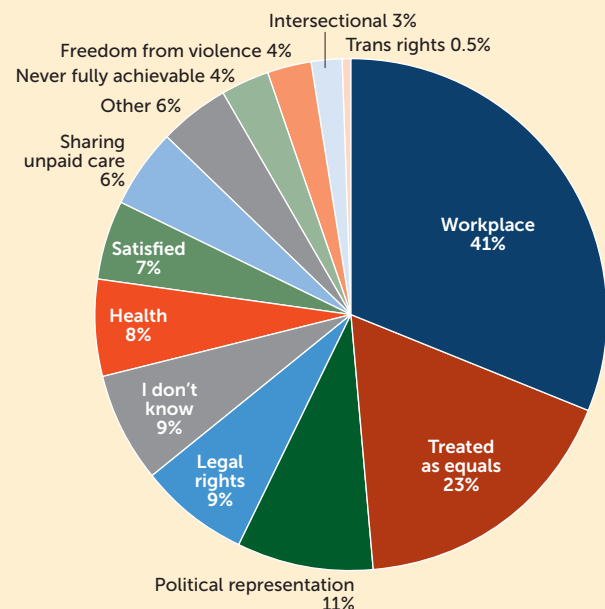
Figure S2.1 In the United States, do you think there is full equality for women in work, life, and politics—or is there still work to be done?



Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

Figure S2.2 What would gender equality look like to you?

Based on responses to the question: “What does gender equality look like to you? In other words, how would you know that we’ve reached full gender equality in our country?”



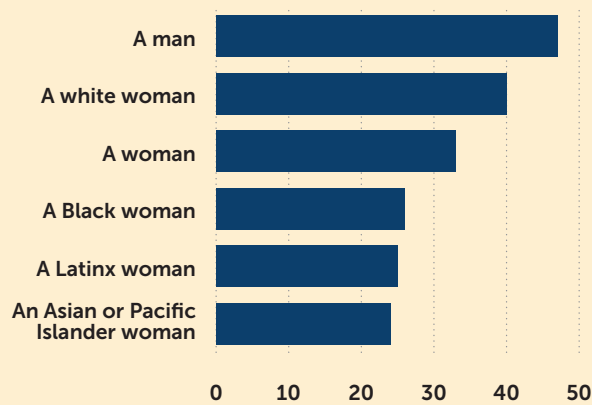
Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

(continued)

SPOTLIGHT 2 Highlights from our national survey on women, peace, and security in the United States *(continued)*

Figure S2.3 Almost half of respondents believe it's a good time in America to be a man, but only a third think it's a good time to be a woman

Percentage who say it is a good time to be _____ in America



Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

Figure S2.4 Most believe access to key rights and services affects gender equality

Percent that believe the component affects gender equality

	Access to affordable child care	Access to affordable birth control	Men having more positions of power in government than women	Paid parental leave	A livable minimum wage	Access to safe and legal abortion	Racism
Overall	60	59	59	59	59	53	53
Women	64	63	68	64	65	56	60
Men	57	54	50	53	54	49	45
Black	67	66	65	68	68	69	75
Latinx	52	55	60	54	59	49	57
White	62	58	58	59	59	51	48
< College	57	56	57	55	57	50	51
College+	69	66	64	68	64	60	57
Black women	67	68	75	69	71	64	79
Latinx women	56	56	68	57	61	52	65
White women	66	65	67	66	66	57	55
Black men	66	64	55	66	65	74	70
Latinx men	48	54	50	51	57	46	46
White men	57	51	49	51	52	46	41
Democratic women	79	78	83	76	77	73	74
Independent women	60	59	61	59	59	52	57
Republican women	46	42	49	50	50	32	39
Democratic men	73	75	73	71	78	75	74
Independent men	54	48	43	48	45	43	34
Republican men	42	40	35	42	40	31	31

Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

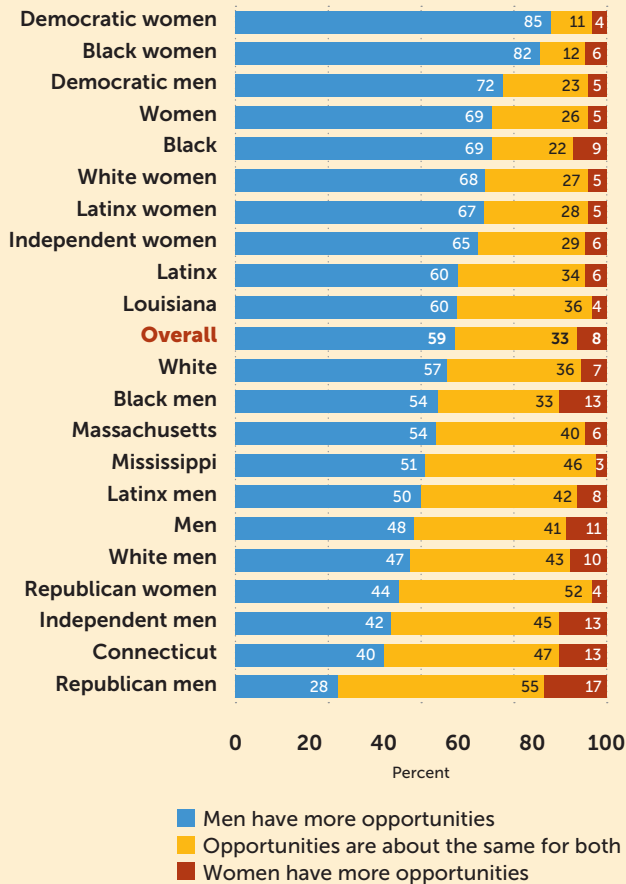
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Most adults see women's access to affordable birth control, abortion, livable wage jobs, equal pay, parental leave, and affordable healthcare as important components of gender equality (figure S2.4). But most say that only a minority of women in the United States have access to these services and opportunities. Respondents are especially likely to say that women lack access to affordable child care—an unmet need exacerbated by COVID-19.

A majority of respondents believe that men have more opportunities than women in getting good-paying jobs with benefits—although men are generally least likely to see these same gaps. Women and men of color in bottom-ranking Louisiana and Mississippi are most likely to see gaps in economic opportunities: more than 70 percent of women and men of color believe that men have more opportunities to get good-paying jobs with benefits, while one-third or fewer white men believe the same (figure S2.5).

SPOTLIGHT 2 Highlights from our national survey on women, peace, and security in the United States (continued)

Figure S2.5 Most agree that men have more access to opportunities and well-paying jobs than women

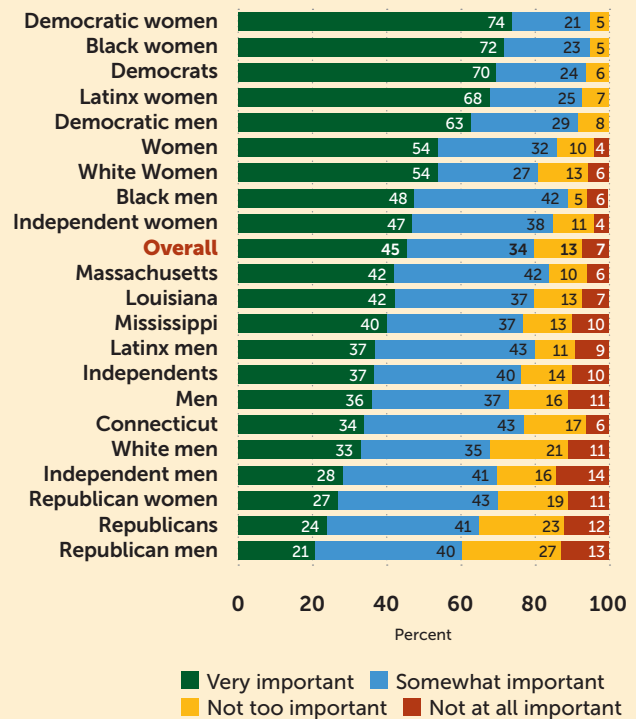


Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

On the political front, most respondents say it is important that elected officials work on issues related to women's rights and equality (figure S2.6). This cuts across race, gender, and party affiliation, with two-thirds of Republicans agreeing that this is an important issue for elected officials.

Views about women politicians differ. More than three in five Democratic women and men and Black women—but fewer than one in three Republican women and men—believe the country would be better off with more women in political office (figure S2.7).

Figure S2.6 Working on women's rights and issues is most important to Democratic women, and least important to Republican men



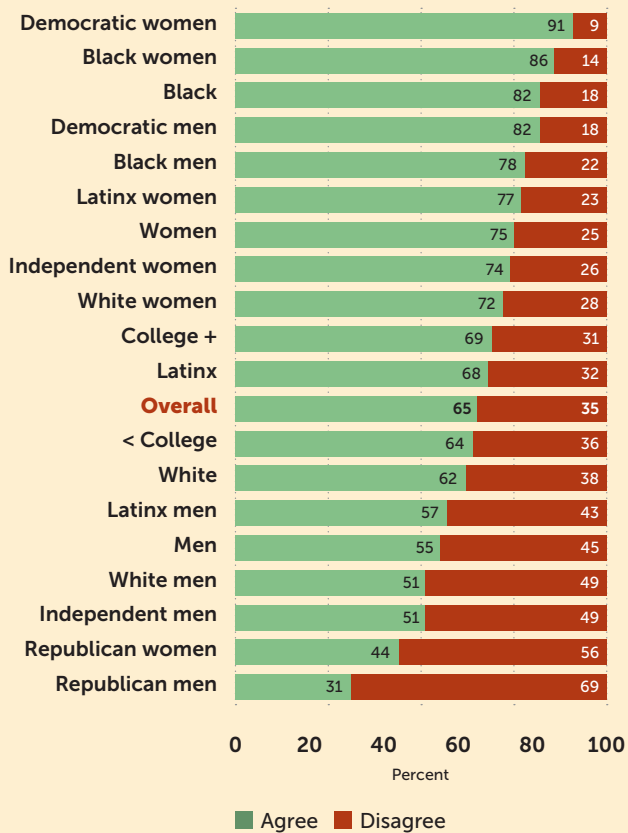
Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

These insights from our survey shine light on some major differences in how gender, race, and political affiliation affect people's view of gender equality in the United States. The top-line results show that while many people believe that there is still more work to be done, women and people of color are more likely to see the gaps and barriers to full equality and feel that more work needs to be done before the United States will reach equality and become a global leader on gender equity.

(continued)

SPOTLIGHT 2 Highlights from our national survey on women, peace, and security in the United States *(continued)*

Figure S2.7 Views differ on whether the country would be better off with more women in political office



Note

1. Klugman et al. forthcoming. The survey by YouGov, analyzed by PerryUndem, was conducted among 2,598 adults ages 18 and older from August 7 to August 18, 2020, using YouGov's non-probability online panel. The survey sample included oversamples (larger shares than their population shares) of Black and Latinx women nationwide, as well as residents of the top two and bottom two ranked states. Margins of error apply only to probability-based samples. If this were a probability sample the margin of error would be +2.5 percentage points for the total results. For smaller subsamples, such as state oversamples, the margins of error would be bigger. All quotations in the report are from the survey.

Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

CHAPTER 3

Understanding disparities and looking behind the dimensions

Efforts to advance gender equality must also address racial and ethnic equality and economic justice.

This chapter outlines major racial disparities and investigates underlying drivers affecting women's well-being across the dimensions of security, justice, and inclusion. It draws on a body of existing evidence and analysis of the WPS Index, complemented by findings from our August 2020 survey with YouGov and PerryUndem.⁴⁷ It concludes by highlighting key implications for the way forward.

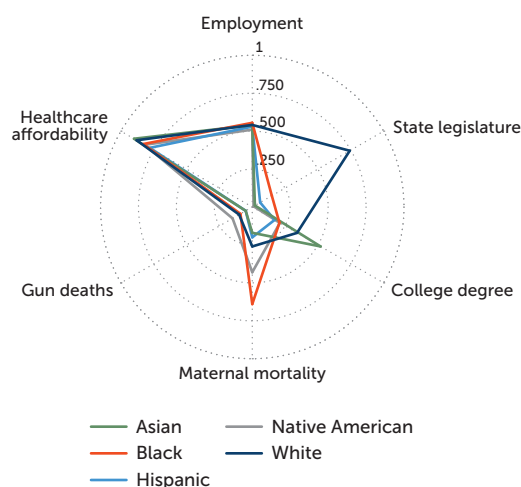
Glaring racial disparities

Awareness around the scale of racial injustice has again surged to the fore of national consciousness since the killing of George Floyd. Multiple and systemic forms of injustice have characterized the United States for centuries—from policing to education to poverty.

The US WPS Index measures women's well-being across states, but the scores and rankings do not directly show the disparities between the wealthy and poor or across different racial and ethnic groups and other intersectional challenges facing diverse groups of women.

Racial injustice compounds gender inequalities for Black, Native American, and other women of color. Between white and Black women,⁴⁸ gaps are most marked in the inclusion dimension, with wide disparities in women's representation in state legislatures and college degree acquisition (figure 3.1). While Black women are employed at higher rates than white women, their rates of representation in state legislatures and attainment of a college degree are much lower. And the quality of work and level of pay tend to be worse

FIGURE 3.1 Large racial disparities across index indicators



Note: The values are normalized for the purpose of comparison. See statistical table 4 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.
Source: Authors' estimates.

for Black women. For every dollar paid to white men, Black women earn 62 cents, Native American women earn 57 cents, and Latinx women earn 54 cents.⁴⁹ Based on rates of change in women's pay since 1985, recent Institute for Women's Policy Research calculations show that it will take Black women another 110 years—until 2130—to catch up to the

earnings of white men.⁵⁰ A survey conducted by TIME'S UP and PerryUndem in June 2020 found that Black and Latinx women are least confident that they receive pay equal to that of people in all other demographic groups.⁵¹

A growing body of evidence from the economic and public health literatures documents that disparities in maternal mortality, and more recently in COVID-19 complications and fatalities, are explained not just by economic insecurity but also by the stress of everyday racism facing Black and Native American people in the United States.⁵²

The systemic forces behind these disparities are driven by explicit and implicit discrimination.⁵³ Efforts to address gender equality must support racial and ethnic equality and economic justice simultaneously because gender equality can be fully achieved only through an intersectional approach.

"When all women—whether white or POC [people of color], straight, bi, lesbian, or trans—have a real opportunity to succeed without barriers."

*—white man from Illinois, age 30,
on what gender equality looks like to him*

Disparities are evident in the six US WPS Index indicators with race-disaggregated data—employment, state legislature, college degree, maternal mortality, healthcare affordability, and women's gun deaths (figure 3.1; see statistical table 4).⁵⁴

The most glaring disparities:

- More than half of Asian women and over a third of white women have obtained a bachelor's degree, compared with a quarter of Black women and less than a fifth of Hispanic women. In Wisconsin and Ohio, 18 percent of Black women have completed college, the lowest rates in the country, compared with 90 percent of white women in the District of Columbia.
- For Native American women in Montana, maternal mortality rates average 167 deaths per 100,000 live births, seven times higher than the rate for white women in Montana and almost six times the national average. This rate is similar to the rate in war-torn Yemen and worse than the maternal mortality risks women face in Botswana and India.⁵⁵
- For Black women in New Jersey, maternal mortality rates average 132 deaths per 100,000 live births, nearly quadruple that for white women in the state and 4.4 times the national average. This rate is similar to that in Venezuela and worse than that in Iraq and Nicaragua.⁵⁶
- Three-fourths of female state legislators are white, and there are no Native American women legislators in 37 states and the District of Columbia.
- Approximately 3 in 10 Hispanic women in Arkansas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Missouri, North Carolina, and South Carolina report not seeing a doctor in the past 12 months because of cost, compared with the 14 percent of women on average. Among Black women, 17 percent report that healthcare is unaffordable, an alarming figure considering

"Ugh, there were so many [times when I felt discriminated against as a woman]. As a Black woman, I often feel the discrimination twice-fold, spoken of in feminist theory as misogyny-noir. One of the most visceral memories is when I was job hunting 10 years ago, straight out of college, and the prospective employer asked me about family planning. It felt very inappropriate because I don't think a man would have been asked the same, if having a child would affect their being able to work."

*—Black woman from Virginia, age 34,
on a time where she felt discriminated
against or unsafe because she is a woman*

that Black people are dying from COVID-19 at twice the rate of white people.⁵⁷

COVID-19 and the related economic crisis are taking an unprecedented toll on Americans, with major burdens falling on women, especially Black and Latinx women. Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey in August 2020 found that over half of Black and Latinx women had less than \$200 in savings, and fewer than 1 in 10 had savings above \$10,000. By contrast, one in three white men had more than \$10,000 saved. The crisis has exacerbated longstanding and multifaceted racial and gender pay disparities. Over half of Latinx women have had their work hours cut since the pandemic's onset, compared with less than a third of white women. And a quarter of Black women have been temporarily laid off, while less than a fifth of white women have lost their job.⁵⁸

A closer look at the inclusion dimension

Women's ability to participate fully in the economy and politics is central to their well-being, to their families and society, and to economic prosperity. The inclusion dimension in the index covers four indicators—employment, share of working women in poverty (working poor), representation in the state legislature, and share of women with a college degree.

The best performers on the inclusion dimension are the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Colorado, which score in the top two quintiles for employment, working poor, and college degree. The states that fare the worst are West Virginia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. (Statistical table 3 presents state scores individually for the three dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security.)

Employment

Women who work in well-paid jobs are more likely to be able to afford preventive healthcare, better able to withstand economic shocks and unexpected expenses, and more likely to leave an abusive partner because they are financially independent.⁵⁹ Labor force participation by women also boosts economic growth—McKinsey estimates that the United States could add up to \$4.3 trillion in annual GDP in 2025 if women achieved gender equality.⁶⁰

Over the past several decades, women across the United States have joined the labor force in rising numbers,

including in higher-paying managerial and professional occupations, and thus women's earnings have risen.⁶¹ This progress has been uneven, however: employment opportunities for women vary by their location, race, and ethnicity, among other factors.

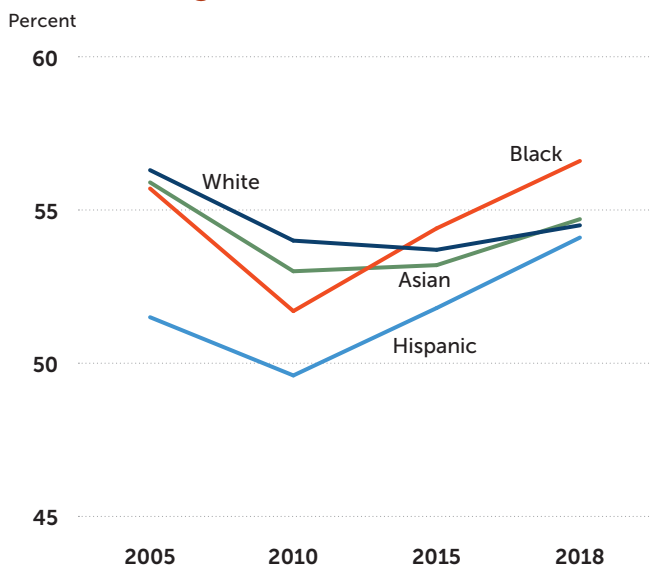
Women's employment varies considerably across states. Women are most likely to be employed in the District of Columbia, at 57 percent, followed by North Dakota (50 percent) and Maryland (49 percent). Women's employment rates are lowest in West Virginia (36 percent), followed closely by Idaho, New Mexico, and Utah (all 38 percent).

Trends reveal that white women are the only group that has experienced a decline in the share working: since 2005, the share fell from 56 to 54 percent (figure 3.2). The employment rates for Black and Asian women rose several percentage points over the same period, while rates for Hispanic women increased only slightly.

As of 2018, Black women had the highest rates of employment, ranging from highs of 59 percent in Maryland, 58 percent in Nebraska, and 57 percent in Texas to lows of 45 percent in Michigan and Mississippi (see statistical table 4). In most states, Black women are employed at higher rates than white women, except in the District of Columbia, where 74 percent of white women are employed compared with 46 percent of Black women.

Black women are often the primary source of economic support for their families: four of five Black mothers are breadwinners, and over half of Black breadwinner mothers are raising families on their own.⁶² But Black women experience

FIGURE 3.2 White women are the only racial or ethnic group experiencing a decline in the share working, 2005–18



Note: Listed race categories do not include mixed identity. See statistical table 4 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.
Source: Authors' estimates based on Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (Ruggles et al. 2020).

huge pay disparities: over their lifetimes, Black women lose an average of \$946,120 to the wage gap relative to white men.⁶³ They are far less likely to be promoted; only 58 Black women per every 100 white men are promoted to a managerial position. Less than 2 percent of corporate vice presidents are Black women, and they occupy only about 1 percent of C-suite positions, such as chief executive officer or chief financial officer.⁶⁴

Latinx women also face considerable discrimination at work. Over a 40-year career, the typical Latinx woman earns \$1,056,120 less than the average white man,⁶⁵ and this wage gap has barely changed over the past several decades. Latinx women also face discrimination in hiring and promotions: more than a third have reported discrimination due to their ethnicity during the hiring process,⁶⁶ and only 57 Latinx women per every 100 men are promoted in management.⁶⁷

Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that almost 9 in 10 Black women and 2 in 3 Latinx women believe that white women have more opportunities than women of color, compared with just over half of white women. Perceptions also vary sharply across party lines, with three in five Republican women believing that opportunities are equal for women regardless of race, while just one in eight Democratic women think the same.

Working poor

Employment does not guarantee a living wage. Women are more likely to live in poverty than men, with Black and Native American women more than twice as likely as white women to live in poverty.⁶⁸ However, much of the conversation about addressing poverty centers around getting people jobs, which obscures the fact that many workers—women and men—live in poverty while working (the working poor).

Women are more likely than men to work in jobs that pay low wages, especially Black and Latinx women.⁶⁹ Analysis from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that women are more likely than men to be part of the working poor.⁷⁰

The higher incidence of working poverty among women is partly explained by their higher rates of part-time work, often because of heavy unpaid care responsibilities.⁷¹ Part-time work also typically means less access to employer-provided health insurance and such benefits as vacation leave, paid sick days, family and medical leave, and employer-sponsored retirement accounts.⁷² The higher incidence of working poor women is also partly explained by lower pay, both because women are more likely than men to be in low-paid occupations and because they are paid less for the same jobs.

"I applied for a different position, and one of the managers told me that he'd never seen a Black woman manager before, so not to bother applying."

—Black woman from Texas, age 59, on a time she felt discriminated against or unsafe because she is a woman

The share of women who are working and in poverty varies across states, from highs approaching 10 percent in New Mexico, Mississippi, and Louisiana, to lows of around 3 percent in New Hampshire, Hawaii, and Maryland—patterns broadly associated with overall median annual earnings in a state.⁷³

US Bureau of Labor Statistics data show that Black and Hispanic women are much more likely to be among the working poor than white or Asian women.⁷⁴ In 2018, about 7 percent of Black women and 8 percent of Hispanic women working full-time had weekly earnings below \$350, compared with 5 percent of white women.⁷⁵ This pattern contributes to income poverty rates for households of color that are more than twice those of white households.⁷⁶

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the disproportionate economic challenges that Black, Latinx, and other people of color face (box 3.1).

Political representation

Women in office generally have broader agendas than men—partially to establish their expertise in office, but also to cover the wide range of issues important to their constituents.⁷⁷ For example, among legislators, women tend to vote more frequently than men for legislation that addresses environmental issues.⁷⁸ A Pew Research Center poll found that women in office express concerns about issues such as education, healthcare, birth control, abortion, and the environment at higher rates than men.⁷⁹

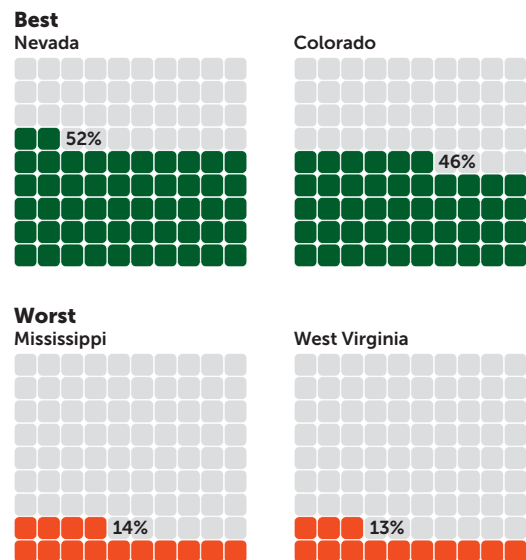
Our survey by YouGov/PerryUndem found that about two in three Americans think that the country would be better off with more women in political office. Nearly four in five adults believe that it is important for elected officials to work on issues related to gender equality, and nearly three in four say that women's rights and well-being are important issues affecting their vote in state elections.

In 2019, Nevada was the only state where women have reached parity in representation in the state legislature.

Colorado was approaching parity, at 46 percent (figure 3.3), and in only three other states—Oregon, Washington, and Vermont—is the share of women at least 40 percent. At the other end, in seven states (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wyoming) fewer than one in five state legislators are women, ranging as low as 13 percent in West Virginia. Interestingly, although 55 percent of Mississippi residents see benefits from having more women in office according to our YouGov/PerryUndem survey, women represent only 14 percent of state legislators.

On average, women represent only about 30 percent of state legislators, though the share has risen from 15 percent in 1985 and 22 percent at the turn of the century.⁸⁰ At current

FIGURE 3.3 The best and worst states for women's representation in the state legislature, 2019



Note: See statistical tables 1 and 6 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.
Source: Authors' estimates based on CAWP (2020).

BOX 3.1 COVID-19 is widening gender and racial gaps in work and employment

While data and research about systemic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain limited, it is clear that women and Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American communities have been badly hurt, especially in the labor market. Overall, women lost nearly 11 million jobs between February and May, because many worked in accommodations and food service, and regained just 3 million in June.¹ These trends are not unique to the United States—globally, women's job loss rates related to COVID-19 are about twice those of men.²

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that for all groups of women, unemployment rates had soared by mid

2020—for example, for Hispanic women, rates of unemployment more than quadrupled, to 19 percent.³

The gendered job impacts of COVID-19 have also varied by state and over time. In Missouri, nearly 4,000 more men than women were unemployed in March, but by June, over 26,000 more women were unemployed than men.⁴

Unemployment benefits also vary widely by state. Florida caps weekly unemployment benefits at \$275 per week, whereas unemployed workers receive 60 percent of their weekly wages up to \$713 in New Jersey and 50 percent of weekly wages up to \$823 in Massachusetts.⁵ A recent

(continued)

BOX 3.1 COVID-19 is widening gender and racial gaps in work and employment *(continued)*

Brookings survey found that Black Americans waited an average of eight days longer to receive unemployment benefits than Latinx and white Americans, and they were also more likely to have children and to be a single parent.⁶

In July 2020, one in five mothers reported that their children were not eating adequately because they could not afford enough food, rising to one in four in Louisiana, Nevada, and New Mexico, and 29 percent of mothers reported being behind on rent.⁷ In 13 states—including Alabama, New Mexico, and Rhode Island—and the District of Columbia, at least 30 percent of children lived in households that do not get enough to eat or are behind on rent or mortgage payments.⁸

These challenges also expose large racial gaps, with 51 percent of Latinx women and 48 percent of Black women reporting not having enough money to pay for their basic needs and bills, compared with 36 percent of women overall.⁹

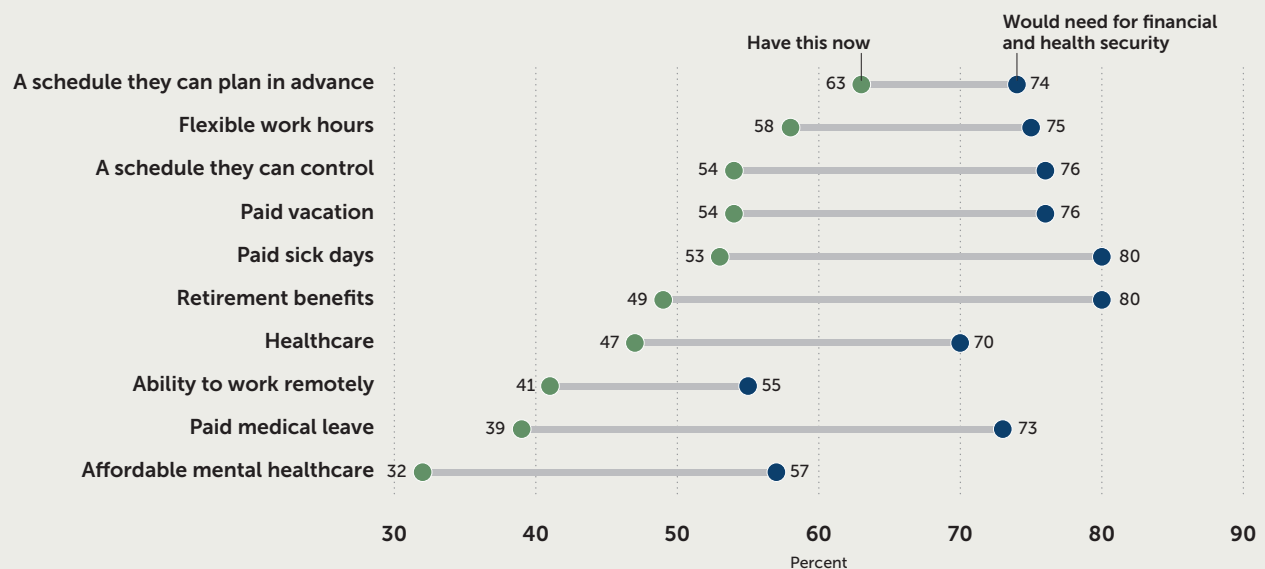
Work hours were cut for many women who continued to work during the pandemic. Work hours for mothers with young children fell four to five times more than fathers' hours did in April.¹⁰ As documented by a recent survey by Promundo and Oxfam, not only did women continue to perform most of the unpaid care and domestic work, but these responsibilities increased more sharply for Asian, Black, and Latinx women than for white women.¹¹ Independent of employment status, Black and Hispanic women are also more likely than white women to be single parents, so they are more affected by the current shortage and prohibitive costs of childcare.¹²

A recent TIME'S UP and YouGov survey found that four in five women need paid sick days and retirement benefits in order to achieve financial health and security, but only about half of women say they have these protections (box figure 1).¹³ Among women struggling to make ends meet, more than three in four said that they needed "flexible work hours" and "a schedule you can control," as well as paid sick days and retirement benefits.

Women businessowners also face higher risks during the COVID-19 recession. Nearly 40 percent of the hardest hit businesses—those in the food services, retail, and accommodation industries—are owned or jointly owned by women.¹⁴ As in the aftermath of the 2008 recession, the resilience of racial and ethnic minority and women-owned businesses will be essential for the nation's overall economic recovery.

Notes

1. US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020b; Madgavkar et al. 2020.
2. Madgavkar et al. 2020.
3. US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020b.
4. Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations n.d.
5. Florida Department of Economic Opportunity n.d.; New Jersey Division of Unemployment Insurance 2020; Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance 2020.
6. Grooms, Ortega, and Rubalcaba 2020.
7. CBPP 2020.
8. CBPP 2020.
9. TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem 2020.
10. Escalante 2020.
11. Heilman, Bernadini, and Pfeifer 2020.
12. Grooms, Ortega, and Rubalcaba 2020.
13. TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem 2020.
14. Liu and Parilla 2020.

Box figure 1 Gaps in benefits among women respondents in the workforce, 2020

Source: TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem 2020.

rates of progress, reaching parity will take until 2057.⁸¹ Still, the 2018 elections saw a record number of women running for office, and the share of women in elected office at both the state and national levels has hit all-time highs.⁸² This increase is traced to higher turnout of women voters⁸³ and rising support from political parties and women's groups for women running for office. Ahead of the 2018 election, civil society organizations worked to promote women on the ballot. For example, the organization Emerge Nevada offered women candidates training programs and resources, including fundraising strategies, public speaking skills, voter contacts, and targeted outreach support, that increased their numbers in the polls.⁸⁴ While not included in the index estimates, only nine governors are female. Though still a small minority, this is the highest number in the nation's history.

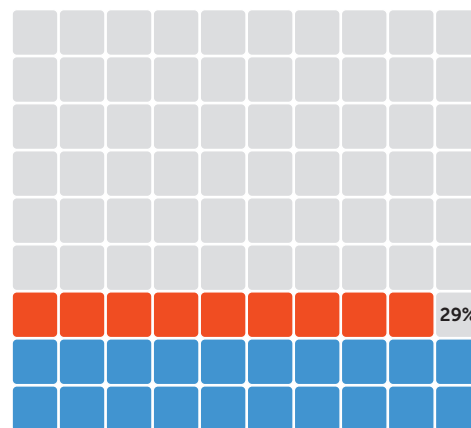
Getting women elected to office has intrinsic representational value and is vital to addressing chronic challenges that have long been overlooked. Women's equal participation in Nevada led to the adoption of major gender-responsive laws, and more than 17 pending bills address sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and sex trafficking.⁸⁵ By contrast, Alabama's legislature—only 16 percent female—recently voted in favor of a near total ban on abortions.⁸⁶

The United States still lags many countries on this front, including its neighbors.⁸⁷ In Mexico, women hold 48 percent of seats in the national parliament and 42 percent of ministerial positions. Women's lower political representation in the United States can be traced, at least in part, to the lack of gender quotas for candidates and officeholders at any level of government.⁸⁸ Some observers have argued that good ways to boost women's political representation more quickly in the United States include adopting voluntary political party quotas and committing to gender-balanced cabinets.⁸⁹ Beyond quotas, however, it is just as important to create an environment that is conducive to women's leadership and that values women's representation in positions of power equally to that of men.

Women's political representation is higher in the Democratic Party than in the Republican Party. In state legislatures, Democratic women represent more than two-thirds (68 percent) of total women legislators (figure 3.4).⁹⁰ This may be due in part to women-headed interest groups, such as teachers unions, that encourage women to become politicians and party officials. Emily's List, an organization that promotes the election of pro-choice women, has helped hundreds of women win local and state offices through training and fundraising campaigns since its founding in 1985.⁹¹

Political parties are gatekeepers to women candidates, especially when male party leaders question women's electability.⁹² Both major political parties remain far from fielding diverse candidates, but especially the Republican Party. Recent research suggests that the support infrastructure available to women is not as robust in the Republican Party as in the Democratic Party,⁹³ though this may be changing with the larger number of Republican women candidates in the 2020 election.⁹⁴ The scarcity of Republican women in elected

FIGURE 3.4 Democratic women hold twice as many state legislature seats as Republican women, 2019



Note: Red represents women legislators from the Republican Party and blue represents women legislators from the Democratic Party.
Source: CAWP 2020.

office may be partly explained by the fact that the activist populations from which women candidates usually emerge—college-educated, professional women—are more likely to be Democrats than Republicans.⁹⁵ In addition, according to our YouGov/PerryUndem survey, nearly half of Republican men (46 percent) say that women's rights and well-being are not important factors in determining their vote in state elections, and 35 percent of all Republicans believe it is not important for elected officials to work on issues concerning equality.

Women still face barriers in running for office and being elected. A major body of research—from the Center for American Women in Politics and the Institute for Women's Policy Research, among others—has documented the obstacles facing women running for elected office in the United States (box 3.2).⁹⁶ Women are less likely than men to run for office and they fundraise less in their campaigns than men,⁹⁷ suggesting that harmful norms and perceptions surrounding gender and leadership continue to work against women. Ways to address these persisting barriers include enacting campaign finance reform, establishing gender quotas, and reforming male-dominated party networks to include and support women candidates through funding and training to run for office.

Women of color now represent almost one-third of voting-age women—an increase of 10 percentage points, or 14 million, since 2000.⁹⁸ But the lack of diverse racial representation is striking, with white women accounting for three in four female legislators. The good news is that this seems to be changing: representation of women of color in state legislatures has risen by 38 percent since 2015.⁹⁹

Members of the LGBTQ+ community have also been chronically under-represented, though there have been some recent gains; in 2020, Louisiana and West Virginia elected

BOX 3.2 Barriers that American women face running for electoral office

Women lack the networks of donors and resources that men tend to have. Women tend to be less comfortable asking for financial support and building strong relationships with donors.¹

Women are not recruited to run for office to the same extent as men. When women are recruited, they respond as positively as men, but men tend to be encouraged to run for office more often by colleagues, family members, and political operatives.²

Harassment and violence against women in politics, especially during elections, persists.³ The #MeToo movement revealed the prevalence of sexual harassment at all levels and branches of government.⁴ In 2017, more than 140 women in California politics, including 6 of the 26 Democratic and Republican women serving in the state legislature, signed a letter denouncing a persisting culture of sexual harassment in politics.⁵ In 2020, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's response to Rep. Ted Yoho's aggressive confrontation on the Capitol steps has inspired other women in politics to raise issues of harassment against women in office.⁶

Lack of affordable childcare and need to juggle work and household duties. Women are more likely to run for office later in life, after they have had children.

Young women are less likely to see politics as a career choice. A 2017 Politico report found gaps between male and female students around being encouraged to run for political office later in life.⁷

Higher standards for qualifications, likeability, and electability. Voters tend to hold women to different and higher standards for qualifications and likeability than men. Research by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation showed that women candidates have to prove that they are both qualified and likeable.⁸ Women are also perceived as less electable than men. A recent Pew Research Center survey showed that two-thirds of Americans thought that it was easier for men to get elected to high political office than women.⁹ Yet when women of all races and men of color are on the ballot, they win elections at the same rates as white men.¹⁰ The results of the 2018 elections confirmed this pattern.

Notes

1. Baer and Hartman 2014.
2. Boschma and Weinstein 2017.
3. Astor 2018.
4. UN Women 2018.
5. Gonzales-Ramirez 2017.
6. Conley 2020.
7. Boschma and Weinstein 2017.
8. Barbara Lee Foundation n.d.
9. Horowitz, Igielnik, and Parker 2018.
10. Reflective Democracy Campaign 2019.

the first openly transgender political officials.¹⁰⁰ The numbers of LGBTQ+ candidates running for office in the 2020 election cycle—almost 850 candidates throughout the United States—is almost twice the number in the 2018 election cycle.¹⁰¹

Educational attainment

One front on which women have made substantial progress in recent years is educational attainment. Women now consistently outperform men in obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁰² But women's educational attainment varies by state and by race and ethnicity, and as noted above, is not translating into equal pay with men.

Women in the District of Columbia lead the country, with 58 percent of women having at least a four-year college degree. Women in Massachusetts and Colorado follow at 45 and 43 percent, respectively. Levels are much lower elsewhere. Only 22 percent of women in West Virginia and 24 percent of women in Arkansas have a bachelor's degree.

Racial differences are marked. Asian women now have the highest rate of college completion (52 percent), followed by white women (38 percent) and Black women (25 percent). Native American women have the lowest share of women with at least a bachelor's degree (21 percent). In every state, white women are more likely than Black women to have at

least a bachelor's degree, with the largest gaps in the District of Columbia (90 percent against 27 percent) and Connecticut (42 percent against 22 percent).

Notably, the undergraduate student population is changing. More than one in five college students are parents, 2.7 million of them (70 percent) mothers, often single mothers, carrying care and financial responsibilities. Student parents are more likely to be students of color: two in five Black women college students are parents.¹⁰³ This creates additional obstacles to college completion, especially when affordable quality childcare is lacking.

Women are chronically underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. In 2015, women received over half the bachelor's degrees awarded in the biological sciences and 43 percent in math, but far fewer in computer sciences (18 percent) and engineering (20 percent).¹⁰⁴ This means that women make up fewer than 3 in 10 of the science and engineering workforce (28 percent). Factors responsible for these gaps include a lack of women role models, male-dominated cultures in STEM industries, and gendered stereotypes that associated STEM with masculinity and discourage female participation.¹⁰⁵

Thus, while women have made substantial progress in education, persistent as well as new disparities will need to be

addressed before all women have equal access to the education and training needed to prepare for their careers and the world of work.

A closer look at the justice dimension

The United States is among the 30 top-performing countries worldwide in the World Bank's ranking of gender-based legal discrimination and protection. But it falls behind on several fronts. It has not passed a constitutional amendment barring discrimination against women, nor is it a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, despite long-term efforts of advocates. The United States, Papua New Guinea, Suriname, and a handful of Pacific Island countries are the only countries without legally guaranteed paid maternity leave.¹⁰⁶

Women's access to justice varies significantly across states. State laws are especially important in the absence of national protection and guarantees. The US WPS Index captures variations in key state laws and discriminatory norms, as well as in access to reproductive healthcare and maternal mortality rates.

The top-performing states on the justice dimension are geographically diverse: Massachusetts leads, but Illinois and Hawaii are also among the 12 best performing states. The worst performers in this dimension are more concentrated, with 9 of the bottom 12 states in the Southeast and Southwest regions. Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi are the worst performing states on this dimension.

Legal protection

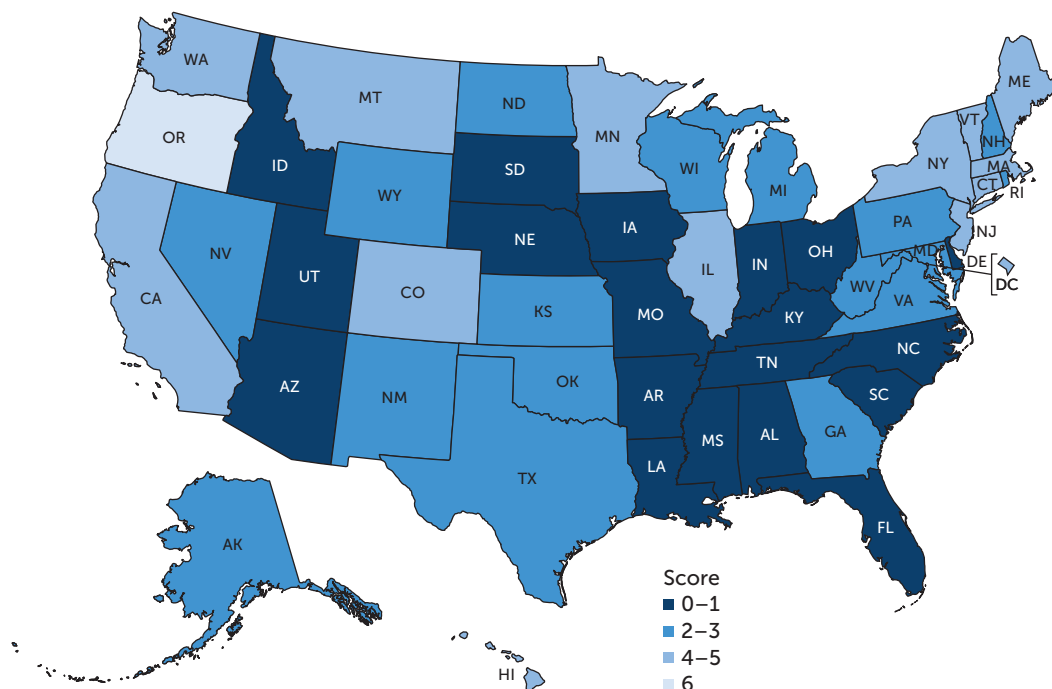
Establishing women's rights in laws that ensure safety at home and at work and promote equality and inclusion is essential. Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that almost two-thirds of Americans believe that equal rights protected by the Constitution affect gender equality. Yet in practice, gaps in federal legislation allow high variability in the protection of women's rights and access to critical services across the United States (figure 3.5).

The upshot is that women in the United States do not benefit from the same legal protections as men. The state in which a woman lives determines her ability to file a workplace sexual harassment claim, her level of protection from an abusive partner, and her ability to take paid time off for caregiving. And this just considers laws on paper and does not take into account the potential costs and obstacles to enforcing these rights.

As noted in chapter 1, states were scored on legal protection based on how many of the seven laws listed in figure 1.4 in chapter 1 they had enacted; statistical table 2 shows the detailed scores and data sources.

While no state had all seven legal protections in place, Oregon had the strongest legal protections for women, scoring six out of seven (see figure 3.5). Six states—Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Utah—scored zero. In these six states, abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders are not required to relinquish their firearms, in-person counseling is mandatory for women to have an

FIGURE 3.5 Legal protection for women varies greatly across states



Note: Higher scores indicate more extensive legal protection on a scale of 0–7. See statistical table 2 for data sources and detailed scores.
Source: Authors' estimates.

abortion, and the minimum wage is below the low-income threshold of \$12 an hour.

Box 3.3 outlines key gaps in national and state laws and the major disadvantages that women face as a result. While some states have expanded rights for women beyond federal mandates, these protections remain uneven, creating large costs for women and society as a whole.

Discriminatory norms

Discriminatory gender norms shrink women's opportunities, block the translation of policy into practice, and compromise women's safety. Discriminatory norms are rooted in traditional patriarchal values, and while social movements and reforms have had some success in eroding traditional views, harmful norms still prevail, threatening women's well-being.¹⁰⁷

Data constraints mean that measures of discriminatory norms for the United States are available only at the regional level.¹⁰⁸ Major differences nonetheless emerge in responses to the statement: "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family." In the West South Central region—comprising Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas—nearly half (49 percent) of men believe that it is much better for women to stay at home, highlighting stark views about gender roles. By contrast, 15 percent of men in the Middle Atlantic region—comprising New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania—believe the same. The national average comes in at 28 percent of men, roughly reflecting views from the South Atlantic region, including Maryland, the Carolinas, and West Virginia.

Discriminatory norms obstruct women's progress during good times and can become even more threatening during bad. For example, survey data collected during the COVID-19 outbreak show that one in three American men involved in hiring processes believe that men should have more of a right to a job than women when jobs are scarce.¹⁰⁹

"Men not listening to me in the workplace or directing questions to my male colleagues when I'm their superior."

*—White woman from Wisconsin, age 37,
on a time she felt discriminated against
or felt unsafe because she is a woman*

Reproductive rights

Access to reproductive healthcare and women's agency over their own bodies are at the core of justice for women and their overall well-being. But access to reproductive healthcare exhibits the greatest range and variability of all indicators. On average, 62 percent of women live in a county with an abortion provider, with a range from only 4 percent in Wyoming to 100 percent in the District of Columbia. In eight states, including Missouri, South Dakota, and Virginia, fewer than one in four women live in a county with a provider.

"When abortion rights are not a contentious issue."

*—White woman from California, age 28,
on what gender equality looks like to her*

Some 33 states require that women receive counseling before having an abortion, and in 13 states counseling in person is mandatory, necessitating two trips to the clinic, which may be some distance away. Similarly, 27 states insist on mandatory waiting periods between counseling and the procedure that range from 24 to 72 hours, stalling women's access to their reproductive rights and adding to the cost.¹¹⁰

Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey capturing Americans' views on gender equality found that 65 percent of adults believe that access to abortion services is important to women's rights and equality (figure 3.6). Democratic men demonstrated the strongest support, with 94 percent indicating that abortion access is important to women's rights, while Republican men and women expressed the lowest support, both at under 40 percent.

Recent waves of legislation have restricted women's access to reproductive healthcare. Several states, including Louisiana, Mississippi, and Ohio, have enacted abortion bans beginning at six weeks of gestation, or before many women are aware that they are pregnant. In the first half of 2019 alone, 479 abortion restrictions were enacted in 33 states, accounting for more than a third of the abortion restrictions enacted since 1973 when *Roe v. Wade* was decided.¹¹¹

Maternal mortality

Maternal mortality varies greatly by state and race/ethnicity across the United States. Louisiana has the highest rates, at 72 deaths per 100,000 live births, with Georgia and Indiana close behind. This rate is equal to that in Libya, and higher than in Brazil and Iran.¹¹² Arkansas, New Jersey, and Texas are also among the 10 states with the worst maternal mortality rates. Alaska has the lowest rate, at 12 deaths per 100,000 live births, similar to the rate in Hungary and South Korea.

Our results are broadly consistent with those reported in *America's Health Rankings 2019*, which ranks states based on 35 health measures.¹¹³ Three of the five best performing states are in the Northeast region (Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut), while the five worst performing states are in the South (Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Oklahoma). Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas also ranked at the bottom of IWPR's Health and Well-being Composite Score.¹¹⁴

The reasons for the state variation in maternal mortality have not been well studied—in part because of data gaps. In 2020, the National Center for Health Statistics released the first national data on maternal mortality in the United States since 2007.¹¹⁵

Some factors emerge as possible explanations for patterns of maternal mortality across states:

- *Contraceptive use.* Increased contraceptive use is associated with lower rates of maternal mortality by reducing the

BOX 3.3 Gaps between national legislation and state laws for women's rights

There are some major differences across states in formal legal protections and in the ways that women are adversely affected as a consequence, including protections against workplace sexual harassment, firearms and domestic violence, and paid parental leave.

Workplace sexual harassment policies. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act forbids discrimination on the basis of sex and race and protects workers employed in firms with at least 15 employees from sexual harassment. Workers in these firms are eligible to file complaints with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which manages cases of harassment under the Civil Rights Act.¹

While the exact number of US firms that are outside the scope of this law is not known, the Census Bureau reports over 5 million employers with fewer than 20 employees,² so millions of women work in small businesses unprotected by federal sexual harassment laws. Some types of jobs are associated with higher risks of harassment. For example, women who receive tips—including wait staff and hotel housekeepers—account for 14 percent of the harassment charges to the EEOC, far above the sectors' shares of total employment.³

Sexual harassment in the workplace is also a racial justice issue. Black and other women of color are concentrated in services industries associated with the greatest risk of workplace harassment.⁴ The high incidence of reports by Black women to the EEOC has been attributed to men being more likely to harass women they perceive as less powerful.⁵ Undocumented workers, those on temporary work visas, and those working in male-dominated jobs are also more likely to experience harassment.⁶

"When the higher up makes sexual advances, and I don't say a thing because I need to keep my job."

**—Black woman from New York, age 43,
on a time she experienced discrimination
or felt unsafe because she is a woman**

Sexual harassment and assault at work can have serious repercussions, including high job turnover, career interruptions, lower current earnings and prospects, and physical and mental health problems.⁷ One study found that 8 in 10 women who experienced workplace harassment began a new job within two years, causing financial stress and highlighting repercussions for earnings and careers.⁸

The good news reflected in our legal protection measure is that 17 states have passed laws protecting workers from sexual harassment regardless of company size, including Alaska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. And a handful of states require employers to conduct workplace training on

sexual harassment. In California, for example, all companies with at least five employees are required to do so.⁹

Firearm possession and domestic violence. Federal law prohibits the purchase and possession of firearms by people who have been convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence or who are subject to certain domestic violence protective orders. But this federal law applies only to spouses, parents, guardians, and former cohabitants of the victim and results in a "boyfriend loophole," since dating partners are not included.¹⁰ Nor does federal law prohibit people convicted of misdemeanor stalking crimes from possessing firearms, despite the fact that stalking is a strong predictor of violence—one study found that 76 percent of women killed by an intimate partner had been stalked by that partner.¹¹

The presence of firearms drastically increases the risk for women. When an abuser has access to a gun, the victim of domestic violence is five times more likely to be killed.¹² Around 4.5 million American women alive today have been threatened by an intimate partner with firearms, and 1 million have been shot at by abusers.¹³ Black women experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and domestic violence than white women and are murdered at rates three times higher.¹⁴ Disarming and preventing abusers from accessing firearms is essential to women's safety, especially in intimate relationships.

Some 24 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws to close the boyfriend loophole,¹⁵ which is associated with an average 16 percent reduction in intimate partner gun homicides.¹⁵ State laws that prohibit abusers who are under intimate partner violence-related restraining orders from possessing firearms and requiring them to relinquish firearms in their possession were associated with a 10 percent reduction in intimate partner homicides.¹⁶ Other state laws to increase protection require abusers to prove that they have relinquished their firearms, authorize law enforcement to remove firearms at the scene of domestic violence, and prohibit those convicted of a stalking misdemeanor from possessing firearms.¹⁷

Paid parental leave. The United States is the only high-income country that does not offer paid parental leave nationally. Federal law guarantees unpaid leave, but many workers, especially minorities, cannot afford unpaid time off.¹⁸ Access to paid parental leave is associated with several health benefits for infants,¹⁹ as well as greater paternal engagement in care.

Seven in eight workers do not have access to paid family leave.²⁰ Because women are more likely than men to take time out of the labor force for caregiving, this widens the gender employment and pay gaps and the motherhood

(continued)

BOX 3.3 Gaps between national legislation and state laws for women's rights (continued)

penalty: mothers who work full time are paid an average of 69 cents for every dollar a father makes, a much wider gap than the national gender wage gap of 82 cents on the dollar.²¹

Only eight states and the District of Columbia have laws granting paid leave to new parents, and these laws vary in scope, length, and generosity. The duration ranges from 4 weeks in Rhode Island to 12 weeks in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington.²² In New York and Rhode Island, new parents are paid about 60 percent of their average weekly earnings, compared with at least 90 percent in Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Oregon, and Washington.

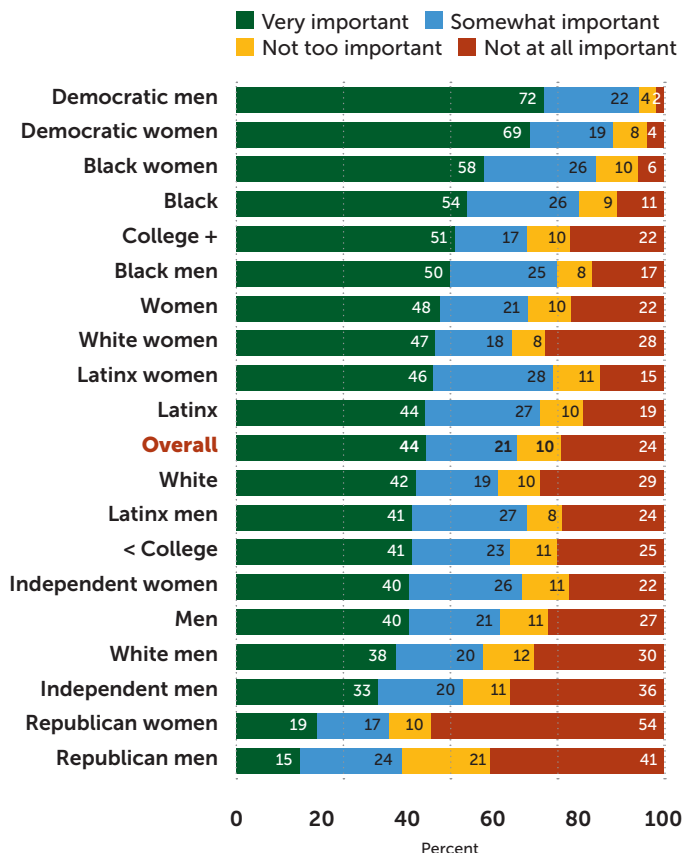
Notes

1. Farkas et al. 2019.
2. US Census Bureau 2017.

3. Frye 2017.
4. NWLC 2018.
5. Cassino and Besen-Cassino 2019.
6. Shaw, Hegewisch, and Hess 2018.
7. Shaw, Hegewisch, and Hess 2018.
8. McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone 2017.
9. Farkas, et al. 2019.
10. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
11. SPARC 2018.
12. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
13. NCADV 2017.
14. WOCN 2018; IDVAAC 2014.
15. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018; Zeoli et al. 2018.
16. Díez et al. 2017.
17. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
18. Rossin-Slater and Uniat 2019.
19. Rossin-Slater and Uniat 2019.
20. IWPR and IMPAQ 2017.
21. Hess et al. 2015.
22. A Better Balance 2020.

FIGURE 3.6 Two-thirds of adults believe that access to abortion is important to women's rights

Responses to the question: "In your view, is access to abortion an important part of women's rights and equality, or not?"



Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

incidence of high-risk pregnancies and births.¹¹⁶ Alaska has among the highest rates of contraceptive use in the country,¹¹⁷ which likely contributes to its low maternal mortality rate.

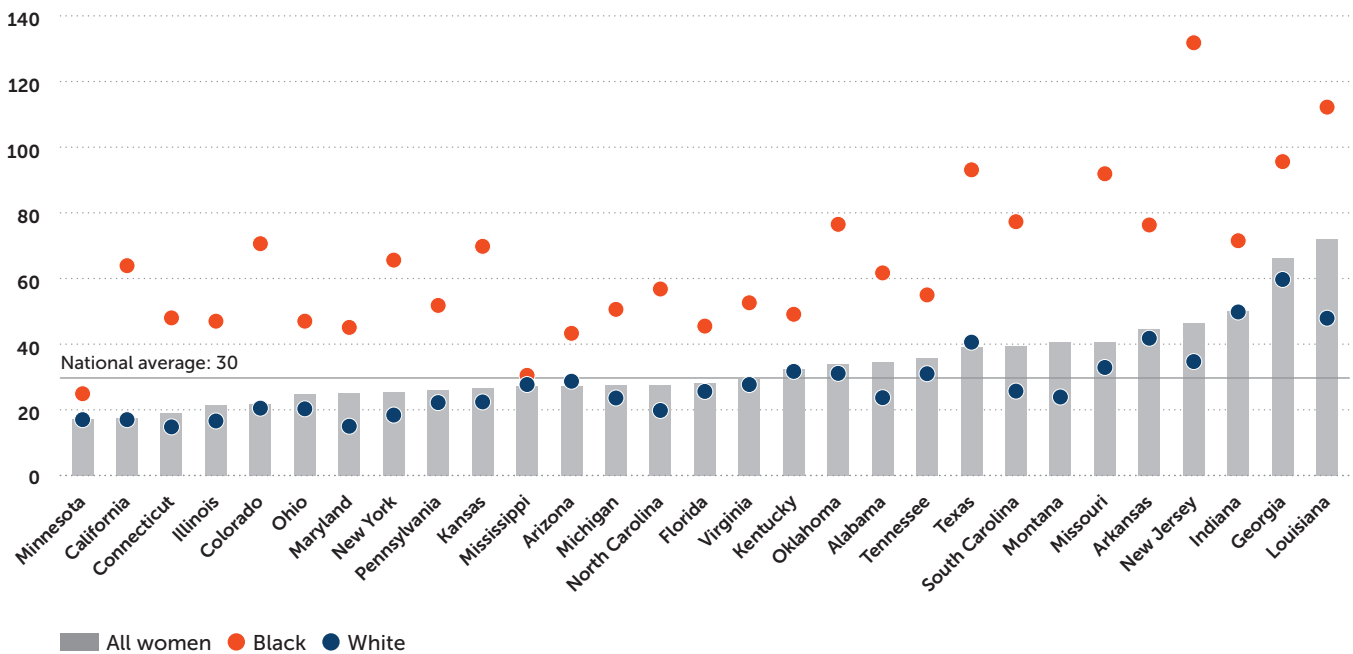
- **Racial disparities.** States with higher populations of Black women tend to have the worst performance on maternal mortality. For example, Georgia and Louisiana have the highest maternal mortality rates in the country (66 and 72 deaths per 100,000 live births), whereas Alaska, Massachusetts, and Nevada do relatively well (figure 3.7).

These gaps are generated by systemic disadvantages facing women of color, including high income inequality.¹¹⁸ Cost is a barrier—pregnant women who cannot afford to visit a doctor for their initial checkups are more likely to die from childbirth-related complications (figure 3.8). Implicit racial biases also drive racial gaps—providers are more likely to underestimate the pain of their Black patients, ignore their symptoms, or dismiss their complaints.¹¹⁹ The overall patterns of maternal mortality are similar to the incidence of low birthweight babies (which has increased almost 20 percent since 1993)¹²⁰ and infant mortality in the United States.¹²¹ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, significant disparities persist in infant mortality between Black and white families.¹²² States where Black women are socioeconomically much worse off than white women, such as Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, have some of the worst rates of low birthweight babies and infant mortality.¹²³

Over time, states that implement Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act would be expected to achieve better maternal health outcomes, and this could especially affect the disparities for women of color, who are more likely to work in low paid jobs and live in poverty.¹²⁴

FIGURE 3.7 Rates of maternal mortality are higher for Black women across all states, 2018

Deaths per 100,000 live births

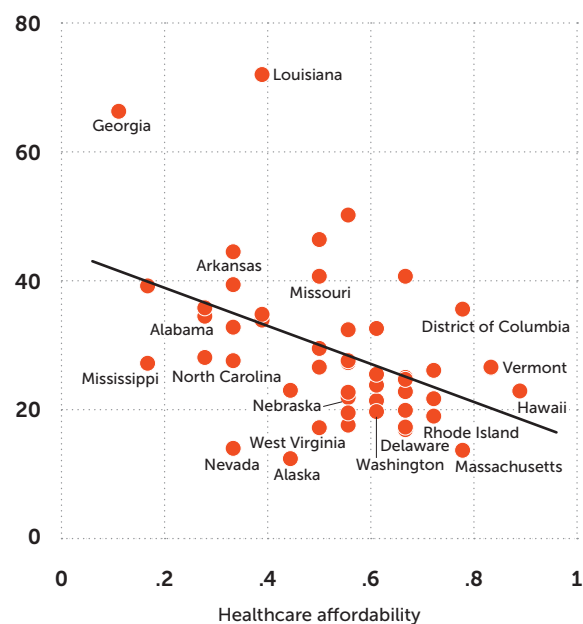


Note: Not all states are shown because of data constraints. See statistical table 4 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates based on America's Health Rankings (2018).

FIGURE 3.8 Higher rates of healthcare affordability are associated with lower rates of maternal mortality

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births)



Note: Healthcare affordability values are normalized. See statistical table 1 for data sources, dates, and detailed scores.

Source: Authors' estimates.

A closer look at the security dimension

The security dimension of the US WPS Index captures women's safety at the household and community levels. The index is the first of its kind to explicitly focus on women's security in the United States. Freedom from intimate partner violence—whether physical, emotional, or psychological—highlights women's security within relationships. Gun violence against women adds a gendered lens to one of the greatest challenges facing the nation, especially given the close link between firearm access and intimate partner violence-related homicides.¹²⁵ Community safety measures women's feelings of safety in and around their neighborhood, and the affordability of healthcare is a core element of women's physical, mental, and financial security. Rhode Island, Vermont, and Connecticut perform best on the security dimension, while Mississippi, Alabama, and Nevada perform worst.

Feelings of safety in the home and community are closely related. In the United States, domestic abuse from intimate partners is linked inextricably to firearms. Nearly 5.5 million women report being shot at, shot by, or threatened by an intimate partner in possession of a gun.¹²⁶ Where an abuser has access to a firearm, women are five times more likely to be killed.¹²⁷ Women in the United States are 21 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries.¹²⁸ Yet only 13 states require abusers subject to domestic violence restraining orders to relinquish their firearms, despite the association between such policies and lower rates of intimate partner-related homicide.¹²⁹

The family—intimate partner violence

While only about 4 percent of women in the United States have reported intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, about a quarter have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner at some point in their life.¹³⁰

Some groups of women face significantly higher rates of violence. Native American women endure intimate partner violence at the highest rates—56 percent have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime and 49 percent have been stalked.¹³¹ Women with disabilities are 40 percent more likely to experience intimate partner violence than women without disabilities.¹³²

Even greater racial disparities become evident in the types and severity of intimate partner violence. While white and Black women report roughly similar levels of intimate partner violence overall, Black and Native American women were more likely to experience severe injuries as a result of the abuse and more likely to have a weapon used against them. Black, Native American, and Latinx women are at greater risk of dying from intimate partner violence than white women as well.¹³³

There are also clear disparities by race in care seeking for intimate partner violence.¹³⁴ A woman's race, language, and cultural and social context all affect whether she seeks services related to intimate partner violence.¹³⁵ Language barriers, poor services, and cultural unfamiliarity with seeking services can all exacerbate violence against women.¹³⁶ In Black communities, fears of escalated violence and potential fatality from police contact further impede seeking help in cases of domestic violence.¹³⁷

Location matters when looking at intimate partner violence. Communities with higher rates of poverty, low social capital, poor neighborhood support and cohesion, and fewer bystanders willing to intervene in intimate partner violence are all risk factors.¹³⁸ Levels of intimate partner violence are similar across rural and nonrural areas generally, but with variations across states.¹³⁹ Evidence suggests that intimate partner violence is more severe for women in rural areas, however, and that access to and use of formal domestic violence services is far lower.¹⁴⁰

Intimate partner violence commonly occurs first in adolescence or young adulthood. Almost three in four women reporting a history of intimate partner violence, stalking, or sexual assault first experienced such abuse before the age of 25, and nearly one in four before the age of 18.¹⁴¹ Only a minority of survivors seek formal support services for this trauma,¹⁴² and adolescents and young adults who have experienced intimate partner violence have higher odds of experiencing such violence in subsequent relationships,¹⁴³ increasing the risk for compounded trauma without support. These findings highlight the culture of stigma and lack of sufficient access to—or low perceived value of—support for survivors in the United States, as in much of the rest of the world. Intimate partner violence can lead to severe physical, reproductive, and mental health complications in the short and long

run.¹⁴⁴ These can be mitigated by support services that provide information about sexual violence, enhanced training to service providers, and more empowerment opportunities for survivors.¹⁴⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the risk of intimate partner violence and associated mental health concerns.¹⁴⁶ Stay-at-home orders and spikes in unemployment have reduced women's ability to leave abusive relationships, while court closures and delays have made it more difficult to obtain protective orders.¹⁴⁷ In New York, the frequency of domestic violence hotline calls increased by 30 percent in April, at the height of the state's lockdown.¹⁴⁸

Intimate partner violence triggers multiple harmful repercussions for the health and well-being of victims, their families, and the community. Women who have experienced violence are three times as likely to consider their mental health to be poor as women who have not.¹⁴⁹ Nationally, the economic cost of domestic and family violence is estimated to exceed \$12 billion annually.¹⁵⁰

Shockingly, publicly available state data on intimate partner violence is nearly a decade old and is not systematically available by race and ethnicity.¹⁵¹ Better and more timely data are needed to inform the design and implementation of policies addressing this challenge.

The community—safety in the neighborhood

The well-being of society depends on the well-being of neighborhoods. Measuring safety through crime reporting data alone overlooks feelings of safety that are closely connected to better physical and mental health, greater social interaction, and neighborhood trust.¹⁵² One study found that people who felt unsafe in their neighborhoods were more likely to suffer chronic health conditions 10 years later than those who reported feeling safe.¹⁵³

This is especially relevant for women. Recent surveys by YouGov found that 61 percent of women in the United States regularly take precautions to avoid sexual assault, including having a phone prepared for an emergency call, avoiding certain areas, and informing others about their location and schedule.¹⁵⁴ Almost half of women respondents to our YouGov/PerryUndem survey said that they “feel unsafe because they are a woman” frequently or sometimes in their daily life. When women were asked if they have a story about being discriminated against or feeling unsafe because they are a woman, they often mentioned the workplace and travel (figure 3.9).

As in most countries,¹⁵⁵ there is a significant gender gap in feelings of community safety in the United States—nearly 80 percent of men feel safe walking within a mile of their neighborhood at night, while the same is true for only 56 percent of women. In the East South Central region—comprising Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee—the gender gap is 36 percentage points, with 77 percent of men and 41 percent of women feeling safe in their community.

FIGURE 3.9 Stories of discrimination and insecurity

Responses to the question: “Do you have a story about a time when you felt discriminated against or unsafe because you are a woman?”



Note: Words in larger text size correspond to more frequent responses.
Source: Klugman et al. forthcoming.

Key aspects shaping women’s perceptions of community safety include experiencing stalking, street harassment, and unwanted attention:

- Nationally, 15 percent of women have experienced stalking, and in four in five cases, the woman knew the perpetrator—most commonly, a former partner.¹⁵⁶
- A large majority of American women (81 percent) have experienced sexual harassment, most commonly verbal harassment or cat-calling on the street.¹⁵⁷
- Public transport is an environment reported as especially unsafe by women. In Los Angeles in 2015, one in five passengers reported unwanted sexual attention while riding public transport.¹⁵⁸

Women residing in low-income areas face higher rates of violence and experience higher rates of sexual assault. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites poverty and unemployment as key risk factors, while research also suggests that perpetrators are more likely to target victims who are less likely to report the incident.¹⁵⁹ Women living in households with an annual income of less than \$7,500 are 12 times as likely to report sexual assault as women living in households with an income over \$75,000.¹⁶⁰ Residence in

a low-income neighborhood is also associated with increased risk for intimate partner violence.¹⁶¹ Women of color are at elevated risk of violence because they are more likely to live in low-income neighborhoods. Similar patterns are reflected in perceptions of safety. Gallup reports that almost half of Americans with a family income below \$20,000 expressed fear of walking alone, compared with 26 percent of those with incomes exceeding \$75,000,¹⁶² reinforcing the strong link between poverty and safety—for both crime rates and perceptions of safety.

Healthcare affordability

While most Americans—more than 90 percent—have some kind of health insurance, partly due to recent extensions under the Affordable Care Act, medical debt and healthcare unaffordability are still major issues for many.¹⁶³ In Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas, 20 percent of women report not seeing a doctor in the past year because of cost. This rate soars to 42 percent for Native American women in Utah and more than 30 percent for Hispanic women in Arkansas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Missouri, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the repercussions of this insecurity. Many people have lost access to employer-provided insurance after losing their job. Between February and May 2020, 5.4 million workers lost health insurance, 40 percent more than during the 2008 recession. Taking into account family members, about 27 million Americans have lost coverage during the pandemic.¹⁶⁴ Our YouGov/PerryUndem survey found that in August 2020, 57 percent of American women had less than \$1,000 in savings, posing obvious challenges in a health and economic crisis.

Access to affordable healthcare is more limited for Black and immigrant communities. In New York, Black people lost health insurance at twice the rate of white people, partially linked to higher rates of recent unemployment.¹⁶⁵ Nationally, 17 percent of Black women cannot afford healthcare, an alarming figure given that Black people are dying from COVID-19 at a rate twice that of white people.¹⁶⁶ In Louisiana and Mississippi, almost 70 percent of Black women report having less than \$1,000 saved. Immigrants are also facing large obstacles under the public charge rule announced by the administration in February, which can deny undocumented immigrants legal residence in the United States and thus access to healthcare coverage.¹⁶⁷ This is a major concern given the disproportionate burdens that Latinx communities have faced in this pandemic, in part because of being more likely to be employed in essential worker professions. The highest COVID-19 prevalence rates are in counties with large proportions of monolingual Spanish speaking residents.¹⁶⁸

The coronavirus pandemic exemplifies the profound inequities that pervade the American healthcare system. While the virus is deadlier for men, initial evidence indicates that COVID-19 and related closures have curtailed women’s access to healthcare and widened racial and economic differences.¹⁶⁹

"Just walking down the street because I'm a woman makes me feel unsafe. Men stare and whistle to get my attention, when clearly I'm just minding my own business and I want to be left alone."

**—Hispanic woman from Texas, age 44,
on a time she experienced discrimination
or felt unsafe because she is a woman**

People infected with the virus can incur expensive treatments and hospitalizations. In a recent poll, more than two-thirds of Americans said that out-of-pocket costs would affect their decision to seek care if they have COVID-19 symptoms.¹⁷⁰

Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare has been jeopardized during the pandemic, including through state policy actions:

- Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas issued emergency orders suspending abortion procedures not deemed immediately medically necessary, though many of these restrictions were struck down by federal judges or relaxed as states reopened.¹⁷¹
- Nationally, one in three women reported in May 2020 that they had delayed or canceled a visit to a healthcare provider for sexual and reproductive health services or had had trouble obtaining birth control as a result of the

pandemic—ranging from 45 percent for Latinx women to 38 percent for Black women and 29 percent for white women.¹⁷²

- In May 2020, more than one in four women overall and one in three Latinx women reported that they worried about being able to afford contraceptives.¹⁷³

COVID-19 closures and other disruptions have affected the quality and type of care for women. As health clinics closed for all but the most urgent cases, more pregnant women miscarried at home, a long and potentially traumatic process.¹⁷⁴ Hospitals throughout the country temporarily banned doulas, who have been shown to improve birth outcomes for Black women, though the restrictions were later relaxed as states reopened.¹⁷⁵

Finally, the pandemic appears to be taking a greater toll on women's mental health than on men's. A July 2020 poll found that 57 percent of women experienced negative mental health impacts because of worry and stress about the coronavirus pandemic compared with 50 percent of men.¹⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, low-income women were more worried about being able to take care of their children as a result of COVID-19 than women who were economically better off: 55 percent against 35 percent.¹⁷⁷ And as noted, the pandemic's mental health impacts are greater for women contending with histories of intimate partner violence.¹⁷⁸

The COVID crisis has exacerbated longstanding and multifaceted racial and gender pay disparities.

Looking ahead

The federal government needs to act urgently to provide fuller legal protections and stronger social safety nets, to ensure that the intersectional challenges of gender, race, and class are recognized and addressed, not denied or overlooked.

This first-ever examination of women's status in inclusion, justice, and security across the 50 states and the District of Columbia has exposed great unevenness, revealing that much work is needed to achieve gender equality.

Establishing women's legal rights that promote equality and inclusion and ensure safety at home and at work is essential. Because such protection is not comprehensive nationally, there is wide variation across the United States. The state in which an American woman lives determines her ability to file a workplace sexual harassment claim, her level of protection from an abusive partner, and her ability to take paid time off for caregiving. And this just considers laws on paper, without taking into account the obstacles to enforcing laws and protecting women's rights in practice.

Gender inequalities are compounded by racial and class injustice. Black, Latinx, and Native American women are paid less than men and white women for the same work. They are less likely than white women to have a college degree. And they are more likely than white women to live in poverty, be part of the working poor, and not receive health insurance through work.

The persistence of gender and racial economic disparities limits economic growth in good times. And the disparities have been exposed and exacerbated during the COVID-19

crisis, underlining the need to address racial justice as part of efforts to advance gender equality.

Public support for addressing the gaps is strong, with 83 percent of adults believing that it is just as or even more important that women be paid equally in light of the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, solid majorities of Americans support gender equality, and recognize that it involves equal pay, opportunities, and access to the full range of reproductive health services.

States from New Hampshire and Massachusetts to California and Oregon have done well in extending protections and expanding opportunities. And they are among the 33 states that have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, signaling support for women's rights and equality. Nationally, women are graduating from college at high and rising rates¹⁸⁰ and now earn a majority of bachelor's degrees.

Closing gaps is a priority. The federal government needs urgently to provide fuller legal protections and stronger social safety nets, ensuring that the intersectional challenges of gender, race, and class are recognized and addressed, not denied or overlooked.

We hope that this and future editions of the US WPS Index will help hold decisionmakers accountable and guide efforts to advance the status of women in the United States for all women and girls.

Statistical tables

STATISTICAL TABLE 1 State performance and ranking on the US Women, Peace, and Security Index and indicators

Index rank	State	Index 2020	Inclusion				Justice				Security			
			Employment 2018	Working poor 2016–18	State legislature ^a 2019	College degree ^a 2018	Reproductive healthcare access 2017	Legal protection ^b 2015–20	Discriminatory norms ^c 2018	Maternal mortality ^a 2013–17	Intimate partner violence 2010–12	Gun deaths ^{a,d} 2018	Healthcare affordability 2016–18	Community safety ^c 2018
1	Massachusetts	.709	43.4	3.6	28.5	44.5	87.0	71.4	20.5	13.7	7.0	0.3	91.0	67.5
2	Connecticut	.696	42.5	3.5	32.1	40.3	95.0	57.1	20.5	19.0	5.6 ^c	0.7	90.0	67.5
3	District of Columbia	.695	56.7	4.7	30.8	58.4	100.0	71.4	31.2	35.6	5.7 ^c	2.2	91.0	62.9
4	Vermont	.691	44.0	4.4	40.0	42.0	62.0	57.1	20.5	26.6	5.6	0.0	92.0	67.5
5	Rhode Island	.679	41.8	3.8	37.2	34.5	78.0	42.9	20.5	19.0	4.2	0.0	90.0	67.5
6	New Hampshire	.652	44.9	2.4	34.2	38.3	70.0	42.9	20.5	22.8	5.6 ^c	2.5	89.0	67.5
7	Maryland	.639	48.5	3.3	38.3	41.6	71.0	42.9	31.2	25.0	4.7	2.6	89.0	62.9
8	New York	.634	42.8	5.1	32.4	38.2	92.0	57.1	14.8	25.5	6.4	0.9	88.0	57.7
9	Maine	.632	43.2	4.5	37.6	32.8	76.0	57.1	20.5	23.8	5.6 ^c	1.9	88.0	67.5
10	Hawaii	.626	46.0	3.3	31.6	34.9	95.0	71.4	33.3	22.9	6.9 ^c	0.0	93.0	40.7
11	New Jersey	.607	44.2	3.6	31.7	40.8	74.0	71.4	14.8	46.4	7.8	0.8	86.0	57.7
12	Minnesota	.606	45.8	4.3	31.3	38.4	39.0	57.1	20.1	17.3	8.4	0.8	89.0	63.5
13	Illinois	.602	43.1	5.4	36.2	35.9	63.0	71.4	15.7	21.4	8.8	2.4	88.0	67.7
14	Colorado	.565	46.1	4.8	46.0	43.0	73.0	71.4	34.1	21.9	7.2	4.4	87.0	49.5
15	California	.564	40.5	5.1	31.7	34.6	97.0	71.4	33.3	17.6	5.1	1.8	87.0	40.7
16	Wisconsin	.559	44.9	5.3	27.3	31.6	30.0	42.9	15.7	19.9	6.8 ^c	2.0	89.0	67.7
17	Pennsylvania	.545	42.3	4.7	26.1	32.1	52.0	42.9	14.8	26.1	6.3	3.2	90.0	57.7
18	Oregon	.541	40.4	5.5	42.2	34.9	77.0	85.7	33.3	19.5	6.4	3.2	87.0	40.7
19	Nebraska	.537	47.0	5.6	28.6	33.8	60.0	14.3	20.1	22.7	8.4	1.2	87.0	63.5
20	North Dakota	.529	49.7	4.9	22.0	31.4	28.0	42.9	20.1	21.7	7.8 ^c	3.0	90.0	63.5
21	Michigan	.527	39.2	6.1	35.8	29.8	65.0	42.9	15.7	27.6	7.7	3.6	87.0	67.7
22	Delaware	.524	44.3	4.8	24.2	32.9	82.0	14.3	31.2	16.9	7.6	3.0	89.0	62.9
23	Iowa	.521	45.1	5.6	29.3	29.5	42.0	14.3	20.1	26.5	7.8 ^c	1.5	92.0	63.5
24	Washington	.520	42.1	4.0	40.1	36.8	90.0	57.1	33.3	19.7	9.0	3.2	88.0	40.7
25	Ohio	.506	42.4	6.2	27.3	29.3	45.0	14.3	15.7	24.7	5.7	3.7	89.0	67.7
26	Kansas	.485	45.1	6.0	27.9	34.7	39.0	28.6	20.1	26.6	7.9 ^c	4.0	86.0	63.5
26	Virginia	.485	45.8	4.6	26.4	39.8	20.0	28.6	31.2	29.5	5.6	3.8	86.0	62.9
28	Alaska	.482	48.1	4.2	38.3	34.2	68.0	42.9	33.3	12.4	7.0	5.1	85.0	40.7
29	South Dakota	.469	48.2	5.3	22.9	29.6	24.0	14.3	20.1	32.6	7.8 ^c	2.3	88.0	63.5
30	Florida	.461	40.2	5.7	30.0	30.6	76.0	14.3	31.2	28.1	6.2	3.9	82.0	62.9
31	Arizona	.453	40.3	5.7	38.9	29.3	82.0	14.3	34.1	27.3	7.7	4.0	87.0	49.5
32	Montana	.446	41.3	6.3	30.7	32.1	44.0	57.1	34.1	40.7	7.0 ^c	3.8	89.0	49.5
32	North Carolina	.446	42.7	6.6	25.3	33.2	47.0	14.3	31.2	27.6	4.8	4.1	83.0	62.9
34	Indiana	.435	42.9	5.9	25.3	27.3	30.0	14.3	15.7	50.2	4.9	4.9	87.0	67.7

STATISTICAL TABLE 1 State performance and ranking on the US Women, Peace, and Security Index and indicators *(continued)*

Index rank	State	Index 2020	Inclusion				Justice				Security			
			Employment 2018	Working poor 2016–18	State legislature ^a 2019	College degree ^a 2018	Reproductive healthcare access 2017	Legal protection ^b 2015–20	Discriminatory norms ^c 2018	Maternal mortality ^a 2013–17	Intimate partner violence 2010–12	Gun deaths ^{a,d} 2018	Healthcare affordability 2016–18	Community safety ^c 2018
35	Nevada	.432	43.9	5.0	52.4	25.2	91.0	28.6	34.1	14.0	8.7	6.3	83.0	49.5
36	Utah	.400	37.9	5.2	25.0	33.6	37.0	0.0	34.1	23.0	7.0 ^c	3.0	85.0	49.5
37	Georgia	.382	43.9	6.4	30.5	33.1	45.0	28.6	31.2	66.3	5.7 ^c	5.2	79.0	62.9
38	Missouri	.381	44.4	5.8	23.9	30.4	22.0	0.0	20.1	40.7	6.8	7.0	86.0	63.5
39	Idaho	.371	37.7	6.9	32.4	27.3	33.0	14.3	34.1	32.8	4.6	4.7	83.0	49.5
40	New Mexico	.365	37.7	9.7	35.7	28.3	52.0	42.9	34.1	32.4	7.0 ^c	6.1	87.0	49.5
41	Texas	.355	44.2	6.7	23.2	30.7	57.0	28.6	48.5	39.2	7.6	3.8	80.0	56.5
42	Oklahoma	.339	43.1	7.0	21.5	26.5	47.0	28.6	48.5	33.9	6.9	5.4	84.0	56.5
43	Wyoming	.308	44.7	5.7	15.6	28.5	4.0	28.6	34.1	34.8	7.0 ^c	8.8	84.0	49.5
44	South Carolina	.304	42.2	7.2	16.5	28.7	29.0	14.3	31.2	39.4	10.6	5.3	83.0	62.9
45	Tennessee	.299	43.0	6.5	15.2	27.7	37.0	14.3	32.1	35.8	6.8	5.8	82.0	40.7
46	West Virginia	.294	36.4	7.3	13.4	21.7	10.0	28.6	31.2	17.2	8.1	6.6	86.0	62.9
47	Kentucky	.277	40.2	7.2	23.2	26.3	18.0	0.0	32.1	32.4	9.8	5.0	87.0	40.7
48	Alabama	.238	39.1	7.6	16.4	25.9	41.0	14.3	32.1	34.5	8.7	6.7	82.0	40.7
49	Arkansas	.231	41.5	7.1	24.4	24.2	23.0	0.0	48.5	44.5	8.5	6.0	83.0	56.5
50	Mississippi	.182	40.5	9.4	13.8	25.5	9.0	0.0	32.1	27.2	8.4 ^c	7.5	80.0	40.7
51	Louisiana	.167	40.9	9.3	15.3	26.2	28.0	0.0	48.5	72.0	8.9	6.2	84.0	56.5
	National average (weighted)	.486	42.5	5.6	29.5	33.0	62.0	39.9	28.4	29.7	6.9	3.3	85.9	56.1

- Notes**
- a. When calculating the US WPS Index, values for this indicator are capped. See appendix 1 for explanation, capped values, and details on methodology.
- b. States are given a score between 0 and 7, with one point awarded for the existence of each of seven laws related to women's legal protection. See statistical table 2 for a list of the laws and detailed scores.
- c. For discriminatory norms and community safety, state-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey, as follows: **New England:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont; **Middle Atlantic:** New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania; **East North Central:** Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin; **West North Central:** Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota; **South Atlantic:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia; **East South Central:** Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee; **West South Central:** Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas; **Mountain:** Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming; **Pacific:** Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington.
- d. Values for states with fewer than 10 gun deaths have been rounded to 0.

Source: See next page.

STATISTICAL TABLE 1 State performance and ranking on the US Women, Peace, and Security Index and indicators *(continued)***Indicator definitions and data sources**

Dimension and indicator	Definition	Main data sources	Year
Inclusion			
Employment	Percentage of women ages 16 and older who are employed in full-time work (35+ hours) every week	Ruggles et al. 2020	2018
Working poor	Percentage in poverty among women who worked 27 weeks or more in the past 12 months	Ruggles et al. 2020	2016–18
State legislature	Percentage of seats held by women in both chambers of the state legislature	CAWP 2020	2019
College degree	Percentage of women ages 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree or higher	Ruggles et al. 2020	2018
Justice			
Reproductive healthcare access	Percentage of women living in a county with a clinic that provides abortion services	Guttmacher Institute 2017.	2017
Legal protection	Summary score based on whether state law:		
	Protects all workers from sexual harassment in the workplace, regardless of company size	Farkas et al. 2019	
	Requires the relinquishment of firearms from abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders	Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018	
	Guarantees unemployment benefits to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking	Legal Momentum 2014	
	Mandates paid parental leave	A Better Balance 2020	
	Sets the minimum wage above the low-income threshold of \$12 per hour?	Economic Policy Institute 2020	
	Allows women to have an abortion without in-person counseling	Guttmacher Institute 2020	
Discriminatory norms	Ratifies the Equal Rights Amendment	Alice Paul Institute 2018	
	Percentage of men ages 18 and older who agree with the statement: "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family"	Smith, Davern, et al. 2018	2018
Maternal mortality	Number of deaths from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy per 100,000 live births	America's Health Rankings 2017	2013–17
Security			
Intimate partner violence	Percentage of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months	Smith, Chen, et al. 2017	2010–12
Gun deaths	Number of women who died from gun-related homicides or suicides in the past year per 100,000 women	CDC 2018	2018
Healthcare affordability	Percentage of women who reported being able to see a doctor in the past 12 months without financial constraint	KFF 2018c	2016–18
Community safety	Percentage of women ages 18 and older who are not afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of their neighborhood	Smith, Davern, et al. 2018	2018

STATISTICAL TABLE 2 Legal protection scores for each state based on seven laws related to protection from violence, economic autonomy, and reproductive healthcare access

State	Protection from violence			Economic autonomy		Reproductive healthcare access		
	Protect all workers from sexual harassment in the workplace, regardless of company size?	Require the relinquishment of firearms from abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders?	Guarantee unemployment benefits to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking?	Does state law:		Allow women to have an abortion without state-mandated in-person counseling?	Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment?	Percent
				Mandate paid parental leave?	Set the minimum wage above the low-income threshold of \$12 an hour?			
Alabama	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14.3
Alaska	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	42.9
Arizona	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	14.3
Arkansas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
California	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	71.4
Colorado	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	71.4
Connecticut	0	1	0	1 ^a	0	1	1	57.1
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14.3
District of Columbia	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	71.4
Florida	0	0	0	0	0	1 ^b	0	14.3
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28.6
Hawaii	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	71.4
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	1	0 ^c	14.3
Illinois	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	71.4
Indiana	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0 ^d	1	14.3
Kansas	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28.6
Kentucky	0	0	0	0	0	0 ^e	0 ^c	0.0
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Maine	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	57.1
Maryland	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	42.9
Massachusetts	0	1	0	1 ^a	1	1	1	71.4
Michigan	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	42.9
Minnesota	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	57.1
Mississippi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Missouri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Montana	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	57.1
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	1	0 ^c	14.3
Nevada	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28.6
New Hampshire	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	42.9

STATISTICAL TABLE 2 Legal protection scores for each state based on seven laws related to protection from violence, economic autonomy, and reproductive healthcare access *(continued)*

State	Protection from violence			Economic autonomy		Reproductive healthcare access		
	Protect all workers from sexual harassment in the workplace, regardless of company size?	Require the relinquishment of firearms from abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders?	Guarantee unemployment benefits to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking?	Does state law:		Allow women to have an abortion without state-mandated in-person counseling?	Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment?	Percent
				Mandate paid parental leave?	Set the minimum wage above the low-income threshold of \$12 an hour?			
New Jersey	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	71.4
New Mexico	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	42.9
New York	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	57.1
North Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14.3
North Dakota	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	42.9
Ohio	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3
Oklahoma	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	28.6
Oregon	1	1	1	1 ^a	0	1	1	85.7
Pennsylvania	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	42.9
Rhode Island	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	42.9
South Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14.3
South Dakota	1	0	0	0	0	0	0 ^c	14.3
Tennessee	0	1	0	0	0	0	0 ^c	14.3
Texas	0	0	1	0	0	0 ^f	1	28.6
Utah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Vermont	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	57.1
Virginia	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28.6
Washington	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	57.1
West Virginia	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28.6
Wisconsin	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	42.9
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28.6
Total	17	13	8	9	7	37	34	
Data source	Farkas et al. 2019	Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018	Legal Momentum 2014	A Better Balance 2020	Economic Policy Institute 2020	Guttmacher Institute 2020	Alice Paul Institute 2018	

Notes

- Law has not yet gone into effect.
- Law or enforcement is permanently enjoined. Policy is not in effect.
- State voted to rescind the ERA. However, this is a legal nullity since there is no article that allows for recinding.
- Law is temporarily enjoined.
- A woman may be able to use telemedicine for abortion counseling.
- Law does not apply to women who live more than 100 miles from an abortion provider.

STATISTICAL TABLE 3 Key statistics

Index rank	State	Index score 2020	Inclusion subindex score 2020	Justice subindex score 2020	Security subindex score 2020	Resident population 2019	Per capita real GDP 2019	Per capita GDP rank minus WPS index rank 2019	Racial diversity score ^a 2014	Urban share of population 2010	State government spending per capita 2017	State government control by Democrats ^b 2000–20
1	Massachusetts	.709	.631	.773	.730	6,892,503	75,258	1	0.8	92.0	11,303	8
2	Connecticut	.696	.614	.735	.748	3,565,287	69,789	5	0.9	88.0	9,489	8
3	District of Columbia	.695	.768	.647	.675	705,749	178,442	–2	1.2	100.0	19,053	20
4	Vermont	.691	.663	.621	.799	623,989	48,855	31	0.3	38.9	11,774	6
5	Rhode Island	.679	.584	.657	.815	1,059,361	51,963	23	0.8	90.7	10,302	8
6	New Hampshire	.652	.667	.622	.669	1,359,711	57,272	13	0.4	60.3	8,222	6
7	Maryland	.639	.719	.548	.663	6,045,680	61,926	5	1.1	87.2	10,046	11
8	New York	.634	.553	.736	.627	19,453,561	75,131	–5	1.2	87.9	14,381	8
9	Maine	.632	.561	.668	.675	1,344,212	43,541	35	0.3	38.7	8,703	10
10	Hawaii	.626	.601	.675	.605	1,415,872	58,981	8	1.2	91.9	9,834	13
11	New Jersey	.607	.628	.640	.558	8,882,190	63,492	0	1.1	94.7	10,482	9
12	Minnesota	.606	.596	.605	.616	5,639,632	60,066	4	0.6	73.3	10,600	2
13	Illinois	.602	.550	.711	.558	12,671,821	61,713	0	1.0	88.5	9,168	14
14	Colorado	.565	.712	.619	.409	5,758,736	61,311	1	0.9	86.2	8,959	8
15	California	.564	.498	.702	.514	39,512,223	70,662	–9	1.3	95.0	11,560	14
16	Wisconsin	.559	.477	.564	.651	5,822,434	52,534	11	0.6	70.2	9,288	3
17	Pennsylvania	.545	.470	.598	.575	12,801,989	56,868	4	0.7	78.7	10,102	0
18	Oregon	.541	.553	.680	.422	4,217,737	52,726	7	0.7	81.0	10,807	13
19	Nebraska	.537	.511	.528	.573	1,934,408	59,386	–2	0.6	73.1	9,177	0
20	North Dakota	.529	.494	.523	.572	762,062	70,991	–15	0.5	59.9	12,842	0
21	Michigan	.527	.440	.619	.536	9,986,857	47,448	17	0.8	74.6	8,528	0
22	Delaware	.524	.478	.538	.560	973,764	64,985	–12	1.0	83.3	11,167	13
23	Iowa	.521	.464	.467	.653	3,155,070	55,051	–1	0.4	64.0	9,864	5
24	Washington	.520	.617	.640	.357	7,614,893	69,761	–16	0.9	84.1	10,037	15
25	Ohio	.506	.408	.510	.623	11,689,100	52,664	1	0.6	77.9	9,201	0
26	Kansas	.485	.486	.495	.475	2,913,314	53,528	–3	0.7	74.2	9,252	0
26	Virginia	.485	.568	.366	.550	8,535,519	56,938	–7	1.0	75.5	8,705	1
28	Alaska	.482	.628	.580	.308	731,545	74,422	–24	1.2	66.0	17,198	0
29	South Dakota	.470	.459	.397	.568	884,659	52,913	–5	0.5	56.7	8,091	0
30	Florida	.461	.434	.476	.474	21,477,737	44,267	11	1.1	91.2	7,346	0
31	Arizona	.453	.478	.477	.408	7,278,717	44,161	11	1.1	89.8	6,838	0
32	Montana	.446	.440	.433	.466	1,068,778	44,145	11	0.5	55.9	8,967	0
32	North Carolina	.446	.417	.406	.526	10,488,084	48,496	3	1.0	66.1	7,848	10
34	Indiana	.435	.391	.366	.577	6,732,219	49,321	0	0.6	72.4	7,961	0

STATISTICAL TABLE 3 Key statistics *(continued)*

Index rank	State	Index score 2020	Inclusion subindex score 2020	Justice subindex score 2020	Security subindex score 2020	Resident population 2019	Per capita real GDP 2019	Per capita GDP rank minus WPS index rank 2019	Racial diversity score ^a 2014	Urban share of population 2010	State government spending per capita 2017	State government control by Democrats ^b 2000–20
35	Nevada	.432	.567	.590	.240	3,080,156	50,043	–2	1.2	94.2	7,384	2
36	Utah	.400	.422	.346	.438	3,205,958	51,407	–6	0.7	90.6	8,379	0
37	Georgia	.383	.464	.301	.400	10,617,423	50,816	–5	1.0	75.1	6,872	2
38	Missouri	.381	.425	.322	.404	6,137,428	47,407	1	0.7	70.4	7,721	0
39	Idaho	.371	.362	.331	.425	1,787,065	40,566	9	0.5	70.6	6,766	0
40	New Mexico	.365	.304	.452	.354	2,096,829	46,304	0	1.1	77.4	10,207	10
41	Texas	.355	.393	.310	.367	28,995,881	61,682	–27	1.2	84.7	7,983	0
42	Oklahoma	.339	.329	.307	.386	3,956,971	50,876	–11	1.0	66.2	7,458	1
43	Wyoming	.308	.361	.286	.282	578,759	67,915	–34	0.5	64.8	15,354	0
44	South Carolina	.304	.301	.311	.300	5,148,714	41,457	2	0.9	66.3	8,614	0
45	Tennessee	.299	.315	.341	.249	6,829,174	48,440	–8	0.7	66.4	6,918	1
46	West Virginia	.294	.173	.392	.374	1,792,147	40,265	3	0.3	48.7	9,012	14
47	Kentucky	.277	.308	.272	.253	4,467,673	42,386	–2	0.5	58.4	8,847	0
48	Alabama	.238	.240	.356	.158	4,903,185	41,389	–1	0.8	59.0	8,516	3
49	Arkansas	.231	.311	.132	.300	3,017,804	39,580	1	0.8	56.2	8,226	7
50	Mississippi	.182	.175	.271	.127	2,976,149	35,015	1	0.8	49.4	8,748	4
51	Louisiana	.167	.196	.080	.296	4,648,794	51,729	–22	0.9	73.2	9,145	4
Data source		Authors' calculations				U.S. Census Bureau 2019	US Bureau of Economic Analysis 2019	Authors' calculations	Shaw and Williams-Baron 2016	ICIP n.d.	Tax Policy Center 2020	NCSL 2020 and NGA 2020

- Notes**
- a. Racial diversity scores are measured in terms of the number of different racial and ethnic groups in each state and the size of each group. The six groups are white, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Hispanic, and other race or two or more races. The minimum score, 0, indicates that there is only one racial or ethnic group in the state.
- b. Number of years during 2000–20 during which the Democratic Party held the governorship and a majority in both chambers of the state legislature.

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data

Index rank	State	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic
Employment, 2015–18^a						
1	Massachusetts	50.2	55.2	..	51.3	48.1
2	Connecticut	48.1	52.8	..	49.4	47.5
3	District of Columbia	74.0	46.0	..	47.3	62.3
4	Vermont	52.1	..	..	..	..
5	Rhode Island	46.8	51.3	..	..	48.6
6	New Hampshire	52.7	..	..	..	59.7
7	Maryland	51.5	59.0	..	56.2	55.8
8	New York	46.7	46.4	40.2	45.2	42.7
9	Maine	48.0	..	..	..	..
10	Hawaii	47.7	..	..	50.5	53.1
11	New Jersey	46.9	52.3	..	49.5	50.7
12	Minnesota	55.5	54.0	44.5	57.4	55.7
13	Illinois	49.1	45.6	..	50.7	50.5
14	Colorado	52.6	54.4	..	53.6	50.6
15	California	44.1	47.0	39.9	48.9	45.6
16	Wisconsin	52.5	50.4	..	52.6	54.1
17	Pennsylvania	46.7	47.0	..	49.0	47.1
18	Oregon	44.4	..	42.0	50.4	53.6
19	Nebraska	55.3	58.3	..	..	54.3
20	North Dakota	56.7	..	..	..	..
21	Michigan	44.2	45.3	44.1	45.6	50.4
22	Delaware	46.0	52.1	..	..	44.2
23	Iowa	52.8	..	..	..	54.4
24	Washington	46.4	56.1	41.6	51.4	53.2
25	Ohio	47.2	49.9	..	46.8	48.2
26	Kansas	51.6	53.4	..	53.2	57.8
26	Virginia	49.7	55.2	..	55.1	53.9
28	Alaska	55.8	..	39.9	65.4	..
29	South Dakota	56.9	..	32.6	..	..
30	Florida	41.3	51.1	42.7	47.7	47.5
31	Arizona	43.1	54.8	41.8	48.5	47.5
32	Montana	49.0	..	40.3	..	46.9
32	North Carolina	45.3	51.4	39.8	50.2	..
34	Indiana	47.5	51.5	..	43.2	48.5
35	Nevada	45.9	50.4	45.6	50.6	51.8
36	Utah	46.1	..	..	54.4	52.8
37	Georgia	45.2	53.9	..	49.8	47.6
38	Missouri	48.6	53.6	..	51.8	53.9
39	Idaho	43.6	..	..	..	52.4
40	New Mexico	41.5	..	42.5	..	43.4
41	Texas	47.4	57.3	47.7	50.7	46.9
42	Oklahoma	45.2	52.5	46.9	54.4	47.5
43	Wyoming	50.6	..	..	..	52.4
44	South Carolina	43.9	50.4	..	47.9	46.9
45	Tennessee	44.7	54.0	..	51.1	46.7
46	West Virginia	38.3	..	..	..	..
47	Kentucky	43.8	51.7	..	49.3	50.4
48	Alabama	40.3	46.1	..	41.1	38.3
49	Arkansas	43.9	48.3	..	..	49.1
50	Mississippi	41.5	45.4	..	..	39.9
51	Louisiana	44.1	47.4	..	48.1	40.9
	National average	54.1	55.5	51.0	53.9	52.9

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data *(continued)*

Index rank	State	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic
State legislature, 2019						
1	Massachusetts	89.7	5.2	0.0	3.4	1.7
2	Connecticut	86.7	10.0	0.0	0.0	3.3
3	District of Columbia	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
4	Vermont	97.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
5	Rhode Island	85.7	2.4	0.0	0.0	7.1
6	New Hampshire	95.8	2.1	0.0	1.4	0.0
7	Maryland	56.0	34.7	0.0	4.0	1.3
8	New York	53.7	26.9	0.0	1.5	14.9
9	Maine	98.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
10	Hawaii	25.0	0.0	0.0	62.5	0.0
11	New Jersey	48.6	29.7	0.0	0.0	21.6
12	Minnesota	82.8	4.7	1.6	3.1	3.1
13	Illinois	65.6	17.2	0.0	3.1	12.5
14	Colorado	70.5	11.4	0.0	0.0	18.2
15	California	42.1	10.5	0.0	2.6	44.7
16	Wisconsin	82.9	5.7	0.0	0.0	11.4
17	Pennsylvania	85.3	13.2	0.0	1.5	0.0
18	Oregon	86.8	5.3	2.6	0.0	5.3
19	Nebraska	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20	North Dakota	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
21	Michigan	70.4	22.2	0.0	3.7	1.9
22	Delaware	60.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	6.7
23	Iowa	95.5	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
24	Washington	75.0	3.3	1.7	11.7	5.0
25	Ohio	69.4	25.0	0.0	2.8	0.0
26	Kansas	89.4	8.5	2.1	0.0	4.9
26	Virginia	63.4	24.4	0.0	4.9	0.0
28	Alaska	86.4	9.1	4.5	0.0	0.0
29	South Dakota	92.3	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0
30	Florida	53.2	27.7	0.0	0.0	17.0
31	Arizona	68.6	2.9	2.9	0.0	17.1
32	Montana	89.1	0.0	10.9	0.0	0.0
32	North Carolina	68.2	31.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
34	Indiana	81.6	15.8	0.0	0.0	2.6
35	Nevada	57.6	15.2	3.0	0.0	15.2
36	Utah	81.5	3.7	0.0	7.4	7.4
37	Georgia	45.8	50.0	0.0	1.4	1.4
38	Missouri	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
39	Idaho	93.9	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
40	New Mexico	61.0	4.9	7.3	0.0	26.8
41	Texas	43.2	22.7	0.0	2.3	31.8
42	Oklahoma	81.3	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.0
43	Wyoming	78.6	7.1	14.3	0.0	0.0
44	South Carolina	60.7	39.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
45	Tennessee	65.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
46	West Virginia	94.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
47	Kentucky	93.9	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
48	Alabama	31.8	68.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
49	Arkansas	76.5	20.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
50	Mississippi	50.0	46.4	3.6	0.0	0.0
51	Louisiana	69.2	30.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
	National average	75.0	14.0	1.0	2.0	6.0

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data *(continued)*

Index rank	State	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic
College degree, 2015–18^a						
1	Massachusetts	44.9	26.8	..	57.6	20.5
2	Connecticut	41.6	22.3	..	60.5	17.6
3	District of Columbia	90.1	26.5	..	85.7	46.7
4	Vermont	39.9	..	..	..	..
5	Rhode Island	35.5	..	..	..	15.0
6	New Hampshire	37.2	..	..	..	26.9
7	Maryland	43.8	31.6	..	60.3	24.9
8	New York	40.7	26.3	..	45.6	20.4
9	Maine	33.2	..	..	..	..
10	Hawaii	45.4	..	..	31.7	23.7
11	New Jersey	39.7	26.0	..	66.3	21.0
12	Minnesota	37.5	18.1	..	43.0	17.6
13	Illinois	35.9	24.1	..	61.3	16.0
14	Colorado	42.9	28.4	..	47.8	17.1
15	California	33.9	27.0	14.9	50.0	13.8
16	Wisconsin	32.0	17.5	..	47.5	16.6
17	Pennsylvania	31.8	20.9	..	51.6	17.8
18	Oregon	33.9	..	..	47.3	16.7
19	Nebraska	33.3	..	..	..	11.7
20	North Dakota	33.3	..	..	..	..
21	Michigan	29.6	20.4	..	58.1	19.4
22	Delaware	33.4	24.9	..	58.8	18.8
23	Iowa	29.5	..	..	..	14.2
24	Washington	35.5	25.0	..	48.0	17.3
25	Ohio	28.8	18.0	..	54.5	21.1
26	Kansas	34.6	..	..	45.7	26.4
26	Virginia	40.5	26.0	..	56.5	13.6
28	Alaska	38.7	..	..	..	..
29	South Dakota	31.5	..	..	..	..
30	Florida	30.2	21.4	..	47.0	25.3
31	Arizona	29.9	24.3	11.9	50.1	13.7
32	Montana	32.8	..	..	..	16.9
32	North Carolina	34.0	24.1	17.2	53.2	..
34	Indiana	27.0	20.0	..	51.5	14.8
35	Nevada	25.4	19.2	..	36.9	10.8
36	Utah	32.1	..	..	41.2	14.2
37	Georgia	33.3	26.8	..	51.5	19.1
38	Missouri	30.3	20.2	..	55.9	22.2
39	Idaho	26.6	..	..	..	10.1
40	New Mexico	31.0	..	12.4	..	16.9
41	Texas	29.5	26.1	20.7	54.5	15.5
42	Oklahoma	27.6	21.3	18.6	40.2	12.6
43	Wyoming	28.8	..	..	..	16.3
44	South Carolina	31.7	18.2	..	43.6	18.6
45	Tennessee	27.7	22.3	..	49.8	16.6
46	West Virginia	20.9	..	..	..	..
47	Kentucky	25.0	18.8	..	46.3	23.3
48	Alabama	27.1	20.3	..	42.9	17.3
49	Arkansas	24.4	18.6	..	..	12.0
50	Mississippi	26.5	18.9	..	..	19.7
51	Louisiana	28.4	18.5	..	38.3	19.1
	National average	38.0	25.0	21.0	52.0	17.0

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data *(continued)*

Index rank	State	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic
Maternal mortality, 2013–17						
1	Massachusetts	15.6	..	..	..	..
2	Connecticut	14.8	48.0	..	..	..
3	District of Columbia	..	71.0	..	..	..
4	Vermont	..	..	..	..	..
5	Rhode Island	..	..	..	..	..
6	New Hampshire	25.8	..	..	..	..
7	Maryland	15.0	45.1	..	..	17.4
8	New York	18.4	65.6	..	13.9	18.3
9	Maine	24.2	..	..	..	..
10	Hawaii	..	..	..	21.7	..
11	New Jersey	34.7	131.8	..	23.8	31.9
12	Minnesota	17.0	24.9	..	..	..
13	Illinois	16.6	47.0	..	..	14.5
14	Colorado	20.5	70.6	..	..	17.7
15	California	17.0	63.9	..	14.1	14.6
16	Wisconsin	19.7	..	..	..	..
17	Pennsylvania	22.2	51.8	..	..	18.7
18	Oregon	18.3	..	..	..	..
19	Nebraska	22.1	..	..	..	..
20	North Dakota	..	..	..	..	..
21	Michigan	23.6	50.6	..	..	..
22	Delaware	..	..	..	..	..
23	Iowa	25.2	..	..	..	..
24	Washington	19.0	..	..	..	21.3
25	Ohio	20.3	47.0	..	..	..
26	Kansas	22.4	69.8	..	..	..
26	Virginia	27.7	52.6	..	..	..
28	Alaska	..	..	..	..	..
29	South Dakota	28.8	..	..	..	..
30	Florida	25.6	45.5	..	33.1	18.2
31	Arizona	28.7	43.3	53.7	..	20.8
32	Montana	23.9	..	167.2	..	..
32	North Carolina	19.8	56.8	..	..	13.3
34	Indiana	49.8	71.5	..	..	..
35	Nevada	13.6	..	..	..	..
36	Utah	23.9	..	..	..	28.1
37	Georgia	59.7	95.6	..	50.0	26.1
38	Missouri	32.9	91.9	..	..	..
39	Idaho	36.9	..	..	..	..
40	New Mexico	33.7	..	..	..	28.5
41	Texas	40.6	93.1	..	16.5	26.6
42	Oklahoma	31.1	76.5	39.1	..	..
43	Wyoming	..	..	..	..	..
44	South Carolina	25.7	77.3	..	..	..
45	Tennessee	31.0	55.0	..	..	30.2
46	West Virginia	18.6	..	..	..	..
47	Kentucky	31.7	49.1	..	..	..
48	Alabama	23.7	61.7	..	..	..
49	Arkansas	41.8	76.3	..	..	..
50	Mississippi	27.7	30.5	..	..	..
51	Louisiana	47.9	112.2	..	..	44.5
	National average	26.1	63.8	43.6	17.0	19.6

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data *(continued)*

Index rank	State	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic
Gun deaths, 2018						
1	Massachusetts	6.7	4.0	..	..	..
2	Connecticut	7.9	5.0	..	..	3.7
3	District of Columbia	..	9.1	..	..	..
4	Vermont	7.1	..	..	..	..
5	Rhode Island	5.5	..	..	..	..
6	New Hampshire	9.0	..	..	..	..
7	Maryland	9.6	7.3	..	4.5	..
8	New York	5.8	5.1	..	3.2	3.0
9	Maine	9.5	..	..	..	..
10	Hawaii	..	..	..	5.6	..
11	New Jersey	6.3	6.4	..	2.8	2.7
12	Minnesota	6.0	..	..	..	..
13	Illinois	7.7	11.6	..	3.5	4.8
14	Colorado	14.0	..	..	..	9.7
15	California	..	9.4	..	4.9	4.0
16	Wisconsin	7.0	8.3	..	..	..
17	Pennsylvania	8.9	11.4	..	6.3	6.0
18	Oregon	12.8	..	..	..	..
19	Nebraska	5.6	..	..	..	..
20	North Dakota	8.8	..	..	..	..
21	Michigan	8.3	12.6	..	6.1	6.3
22	Delaware	4.8	8.6	..	..	..
23	Iowa	7.4	..	..	..	..
24	Washington	11.3	15.2	..	6.4	6.4
25	Ohio	9.3	12.1	..	..	..
26	Kansas	11.5	..	..	..	..
26	Virginia	10.5	7.1	..	5.5	..
28	Alaska	10.9	..	25.1	..	..
29	South Dakota	7.5	..	40.7	..	..
30	Florida	13.3	7.1	..	5.0	5.0
31	Arizona	12.8	15.2	11.2	..	4.4
32	Montana	13.0	..	..	..	..
32	North Carolina	10.5	7.5	..	..	2.1
34	Indiana	10.4	15.3	..	..	..
35	Nevada	..	16.2	..	6.3	6.9
36	Utah	11.2	..	..	..	6.4
37	Georgia	11.8	8.1	..	5.3	..
38	Missouri	12.8	20.5	..	..	..
39	Idaho	13.4	..	..	..	..
40	New Mexico	23.0	..	16.2	..	10.8
41	Texas	11.5	8.6	..	2.7	5.0
42	Oklahoma	12.3	7.8	9.4	..	4.9
43	Wyoming	16.2	..	..	..	..
44	South Carolina	11.2	8.8	..	..	..
45	Tennessee	11.7	11.2	..	..	6.1
46	West Virginia	11.7	..	..	..	..
47	Kentucky	9.1	7.1	..	..	..
48	Alabama	12.9	9.1	..	..	..
49	Arkansas	13.0	11.1	..	..	..
50	Mississippi	11.2	10.2	..	..	..
51	Louisiana	11.6	10.4	..	..	..
	National average	10.1	9.2	14.9	5.1	4.7

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data *(continued)*

Index rank	State	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic
Healthcare affordability, 2018 ^b						
1	Massachusetts	92.0	85.0	..	..	86.0
2	Connecticut	91.0	87.0	..	..	83.0
3	District of Columbia	93.0	92.0	..	..	84.0
4	Vermont	92.0	..	..	..	..
5	Rhode Island	92.0	..	..	..	80.0
6	New Hampshire	90.0	..	..	..	..
7	Maryland	91.0	89.0	..	91.0	71.0
8	New York	91.0	88.0	..	84.0	84.0
9	Maine	88.0	..	..	..	..
10	Hawaii	92.0	..	..	93.0	89.0
11	New Jersey	91.0	87.0	..	..	74.0
12	Minnesota	91.0	82.0	84.0	84.0	74.0
13	Illinois	91.0	83.0	..	..	78.0
14	Colorado	89.0	82.0	..	..	80.0
15	California	90.0	87.0	..	91.0	81.0
16	Wisconsin	91.0	83.0	..	..	72.0
17	Pennsylvania	91.0	89.0	..	..	82.0
18	Oregon	89.0	..	..	..	76.0
19	Nebraska	88.0	78.0	..	..	76.0
20	North Dakota	91.0	..	..	..	..
21	Michigan	88.0	84.0	81.0	..	82.0
22	Delaware	90.0	90.0	..	..	79.0
23	Iowa	93.0	72.0	..	..	86.0
24	Washington	89.0	..	..	91.0	79.0
25	Ohio	89.0	91.0	..	..	74.0
26	Kansas	87.0	78.0	..	..	83.0
26	Virginia	88.0	83.0	..	..	71.0
28	Alaska	85.0	..	87.0	..	..
29	South Dakota	90.0	..	78.0	..	..
30	Florida	85.0	78.0	..	..	78.0
31	Arizona	90.0	..	89.0	..	79.0
32	Montana	90.0	..	87.0	..	..
32	North Carolina	86.0	78.0	..	..	66.0
34	Indiana	88.0	80.0	..	..	81.0
35	Nevada	86.0	..	..	..	75.0
36	Utah	87.0	..	58.0	..	77.0
37	Georgia	82.0	76.0	..	..	69.0
38	Missouri	88.0	84.0	..	..	65.0
39	Idaho	84.0	..	..	..	78.0
40	New Mexico	89.0	..	86.0	..	85.0
41	Texas	84.0	83.0	..	..	74.0
42	Oklahoma	86.0	82.0	89.0	..	68.0
43	Wyoming	85.0	..	..	..	80.0
44	South Carolina	85.0	79.0	76.0	..	66.0
45	Tennessee	85.0	77.0	..	..	72.0
46	West Virginia	87.0	..	..	..	..
47	Kentucky	88.0	86.0	..	..	..
48	Alabama	84.0	78.0	..	..	..
49	Arkansas	84.0	86.0	..	..	68.0
50	Mississippi	83.0	77.0	..	..	..
51	Louisiana	84.0	85.0	78.0	..	79.0
	National average	88.0	83.0	82.0	90.0	78.0

STATISTICAL TABLE 4 Racially disaggregated data (continued)

Notes

- .. missing value.
- Note: All national averages are taken from the data source, except the data for Hispanic, which was calculated by the authors. Data are not presented for all races. Except for employment and college degree, race categories do not include Hispanic.
- a. Data are pooled across multiple years to increase sample size. For this indicator, Hispanics may be of any race or two or more races.
- b. Values are weighted to reflect population size.

Data sources

- Employment: US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019.
- State legislature: CAWP 2020.
- College degree: Ruggles et al. 2020.
- Maternal mortality: America’s Health Rankings 2017.
- Gun deaths: CDC 2018.
- Healthcare affordability: KFF 2018c.

STATISTICAL TABLE 5 Gender gaps

Index rank	State	Employment (2018)		Working poor (2019)		State legislature (2018)		College degree (2018)		Discriminatory norms ^a (2018)		Gun deaths ^b (2018)		Community safety ^a (2018)	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
1	Massachusetts	43.4	60.0	3.6	2.2	28.5	71.5	44.5	43.9	19.5	20.5	0.3	6.9	67.5	80.8
2	Connecticut	42.5	59.0	3.5	2.4	32.1	67.9	40.3	38.9	19.5	20.5	0.7	9.2	67.5	80.8
3	District of Columbia	56.7	63.0	4.7	3.4	30.8	69.2	58.4	61.0	26.3	31.2	2.2	18.8	62.9	81.7
4	Vermont	44.0	56.8	4.4	3.4	40.0	60.0	42.0	35.6	19.5	20.5	0.0	20.4	67.5	80.8
5	Rhode Island	41.8	57.6	3.8	2.8	37.2	62.8	34.5	34.4	19.5	20.5	0.0	6.2	67.5	80.8
6	New Hampshire	44.9	61.6	2.4	1.7	34.2	65.8	38.3	36.3	19.5	20.5	2.5	17.6	67.5	80.8
7	Maryland	48.5	61.7	3.3	2.4	38.3	61.7	41.6	39.9	26.3	31.2	2.6	20.8	62.9	81.7
8	New York	42.8	57.4	5.1	3.9	32.4	67.6	38.2	35.9	16.9	14.8	0.9	7.5	57.7	83.9
9	Maine	43.2	56.3	4.5	3.0	37.6	62.4	32.8	28.1	19.5	20.5	1.9	20.4	67.5	80.8
10	Hawaii	46.0	58.5	3.3	2.8	31.6	68.4	34.9	31.8	22.2	33.3	0.0	5.6	40.7	66.1
11	New Jersey	44.2	62.4	3.6	2.7	31.7	68.3	40.8	40.1	16.9	14.8	0.8	8.6	57.7	83.9
12	Minnesota	45.8	61.7	4.3	3.2	31.3	68.7	38.4	35.7	12.6	20.1	0.8	14.1	63.5	79.3
13	Illinois	43.1	59.6	5.4	3.7	36.2	63.8	35.9	34.3	20.0	15.7	2.4	19.2	67.7	82.0
14	Colorado	46.1	63.6	4.8	3.5	46.0	54.0	43.0	41.2	11.1	34.1	4.4	25.2	49.5	83.7
15	California	40.5	58.4	5.1	4.6	31.7	68.3	34.6	34.2	22.2	33.3	1.8	13.0	40.7	66.1
16	Wisconsin	44.9	60.7	5.3	3.8	27.3	72.7	31.6	28.7	20.0	15.7	2.0	17.8	67.7	82.0
17	Pennsylvania	42.3	58.2	4.7	3.4	26.1	73.9	32.1	31.4	16.9	14.8	3.2	22.3	57.7	83.9
18	Oregon	40.4	56.5	5.5	4.5	42.2	57.8	34.9	33.8	22.2	33.3	3.2	20.1	40.7	66.1
19	Nebraska	47.0	64.9	5.6	4.4	28.6	71.4	33.8	31.6	12.6	20.1	1.2	15.7	63.5	79.3
20	North Dakota	49.7	66.9	4.9	3.8	22.0	78.0	31.4	26.1	12.6	20.1	3.0	19.0	63.5	79.3
21	Michigan	39.2	55.9	6.1	4.4	35.8	64.2	29.8	29.3	20.0	15.7	3.6	22.4	67.7	82.0
22	Delaware	44.3	56.3	4.9	3.1	24.2	75.8	32.9	29.3	26.3	31.2	3.0	31.5	62.9	81.7
23	Iowa	45.1	62.0	5.6	4.0	29.3	70.7	29.5	27.6	12.6	20.1	1.5	15.2	63.5	79.3
24	Washington	42.1	61.0	4.0	3.2	40.1	59.9	36.8	36.7	22.2	33.3	3.2	17.3	40.7	66.1
25	Ohio	42.4	58.0	6.2	3.9	27.3	72.7	29.3	28.3	20.0	15.7	3.7	22.5	67.7	82.0
26	Kansas	45.1	62.2	6.0	4.3	27.9	72.1	34.7	32.0	12.6	20.1	4.0	24.5	63.5	79.3
26	Virginia	45.8	62.2	4.6	3.0	26.4	73.6	39.8	39.2	26.3	31.2	3.8	20.2	62.9	81.7
28	Alaska	48.1	61.9	4.2	3.1	38.3	61.7	34.2	26.9	22.2	33.3	5.1	30.9	40.7	66.1
29	South Dakota	48.2	63.0	5.3	4.1	22.9	77.1	29.6	27.7	12.6	20.1	2.3	21.3	63.5	79.3
30	Florida	40.2	53.1	5.7	4.4	30.0	70.0	30.6	30.4	26.3	31.2	3.9	23.3	62.9	81.7
31	Arizona	40.3	55.2	5.7	5.8	38.9	61.1	29.3	30.0	11.1	34.1	4.0	26.6	49.5	83.7
32	Montana	41.3	59.0	6.3	5.0	30.7	69.3	32.1	28.9	11.1	34.1	3.8	28.4	49.5	83.7
32	North Carolina	42.7	58.4	6.6	4.7	25.3	74.7	33.2	30.4	26.3	31.2	4.1	22.7	62.9	81.7
34	Indiana	42.9	60.4	5.9	4.2	25.3	74.7	27.3	26.4	20.0	15.7	4.9	23.8	67.7	82.0
35	Nevada	43.9	57.1	5.0	4.3	52.4	47.6	25.2	24.8	11.1	34.1	6.3	28.3	49.5	83.7
36	Utah	37.9	64.2	5.2	3.9	25.0	75.0	33.6	37.1	11.1	34.1	3.0	20.1	49.5	83.7

STATISTICAL TABLE 5 Gender gaps *(continued)*

Index rank	State	Employment (2018)		Working poor (2019)		State legislature (2018)		College degree (2018)		Discriminatory norms ^a (2018)		Gun deaths ^b (2018)		Community safety ^a (2018)	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
37	Georgia	43.9	59.5	6.4	4.6	30.5	69.5	33.1	31.0	26.3	31.2	5.2	26.4	62.9	81.7
38	Missouri	44.4	57.1	5.8	4.3	23.9	76.1	30.4	28.7	12.6	20.1	7.0	35.4	63.5	79.3
39	Idaho	37.7	60.1	6.9	5.2	32.4	67.6	27.3	27.5	11.1	34.1	4.7	26.3	49.5	83.7
40	New Mexico	37.7	51.1	9.7	6.9	35.7	64.3	28.3	26.9	11.1	34.1	6.1	33.9	49.5	83.7
41	Texas	44.2	62.4	6.7	5.3	23.2	76.8	30.7	30.0	33.2	48.5	3.8	20.1	56.5	80.9
42	Oklahoma	43.1	58.4	7.0	5.4	21.5	78.5	26.5	25.0	33.2	48.5	5.4	27.8	56.5	80.9
43	Wyoming	44.7	63.8	5.7	4.5	15.6	84.4	28.5	26.0	11.1	34.1	8.8	31.9	49.5	83.7
44	South Carolina	42.2	55.1	7.2	4.5	16.5	83.5	28.7	27.7	26.3	31.2	5.3	29.5	62.9	81.7
45	Tennessee	43.0	57.2	6.5	5.0	15.2	84.8	27.7	26.8	29.4	32.1	5.8	30.1	40.7	76.8
46	West Virginia	36.4	49.9	7.3	4.8	13.4	86.6	21.7	20.8	26.3	31.2	6.6	29.4	62.9	81.7
47	Kentucky	40.2	54.5	7.2	5.3	23.2	76.8	26.3	24.1	29.4	32.1	5.0	27.4	40.7	76.8
48	Alabama	39.1	54.0	7.6	4.8	16.4	83.6	25.9	24.5	29.4	32.1	6.7	36.0	40.7	76.8
49	Arkansas	41.5	55.3	7.1	5.3	24.4	75.6	24.2	22.4	33.2	48.5	6.0	30.2	56.5	80.9
50	Mississippi	40.5	52.5	9.4	5.1	13.8	86.2	25.5	21.1	29.4	32.1	7.5	35.7	40.7	76.8
51	Louisiana	40.9	53.9	9.3	5.1	15.3	84.7	26.2	22.2	33.2	48.5	6.2	35.9	56.5	80.9
	National average (weighted)	42.5	58.6	5.6	4.2	29.5	70.7	33.0	32.0	22.2	28.4	3.3	20.3	56.1	79.0
	Data source	Ruggles et al. 2020		Ruggles et al. 2020		CAWP 2020		Ruggles et al. 2020		Smith, Davern, et al. 2018		CDC 2018		Smith, Davern, et al. 2018	

Notes

- a. Because state-level data were not available, data were collected at the regional level, and thus state values for these indicators are regional averages from the General Social Survey. See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.
- b. States with fewer than 10 gun deaths have been rounded to 0.

APPENDIX

Methodology for index construction, data normalization, and aggregation

This appendix describes the steps in calculating the US Women, Peace, and Security (US WPS) Index. The index is a summary measure capturing achievements in women's well-being across three dimensions: inclusion, justice, and security. The index is a geometric mean of the subindices of the three dimensions.

Two basic steps are key to estimating any index: normalization and aggregation. The policy and academic literature on composite indices provides a robust foundation for our approach to both steps.¹⁸³ Here we outline our methodology, including treatment of missing data, and provide a worked-through example.

Normalization and weighting

Normalization makes data comparable across indicators so that the information can be combined in a meaningful way. For example, all indicators need to be estimated such that higher or lower values consistently mean that the achievement is better or worse.

The choice of limits is especially important where there are extreme values (outliers) at either end of the distribution. Where the observed data range for a particular indicator is wide, the indicator acquires a larger implicit weight. Setting upper and lower bounds can reduce spurious variability, although this needs to be done with care.¹⁸⁴

The values for many of the indicators for the US WPS Index fall naturally between 0 and 100—for example, those presented as percentages (employment, working poor, state

legislature, college degree, reproductive healthcare access, legal protection, discriminatory norms, intimate partner violence, healthcare affordability, and community safety).

While from a normative and logical point of view the aspiration to achieve 100 percent employment or 0 percent intimate partner violence can be well justified, from a statistical point of view, these choices of goalposts lead to large differences in the internal (implicit) importance of indicators when they are combined into an index.

For example, if we use goalposts of 0 and 100, healthcare affordability (national average 87 percent) is about 11 times more important than intimate partner violence (which averages 7 percent).

We would like national averages (unweighted and weighted) for component scores and subindices to take similar values because this means that the components are considered to be of equal importance in the index.

If the idea is to treat all indicators equally, there is a need to either rescale the indicators or use differential weighting. Most composite indices use explicit equal weighting for reasons of simplicity and to reflect the normative equal importance of all selected indicators. This then requires consideration of the goalposts. The goalposts outlined in table A.1.1 are optimal in the sense that they minimize the difference in importance across indicators.

In the case of the US WPS Index, these procedures affect four indicators for which the goalposts are set to either increase or reduce the national average and range, in both

TABLE A1.1 Best and worst values for component indicators of the US Women, Peace, and Security Index

Dimension and indicator	Goalpost	
	Worst	Best
Inclusion		
Employment (%)	30	60
Working poor (%)	10	2
State legislature ^a (%)	10	50
College degree ^a (%)	20	50
Justice		
Reproductive healthcare access ^a (%)	0	100
Legal protection (%)	0	100
Discriminatory norms (% of men)	50	10
Maternal mortality ^a (per 100,000 live births)	60	0
Security		
Intimate partner violence (%)	11	3
Gun deaths ^a (per 100,000 women)	7	0
Healthcare affordability (%)	77	95
Community safety (%)	40	80

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources and statistical table 3 for summary statistics.

a. These goalposts are capped, as described in the text.

Source: Authors.

cases to ensure more equal weighting and reduce the influence of outliers: state legislature, college degree, maternal mortality, and gun deaths.

For these four indicators, we set the minimum values and capped the maximum values to avoid any single indicator having undue influence on the overall index score. For example, for gun deaths, the maximum value was capped at 8.8 in 100,000 people. For college degree, we capped at 50 percent because the observed maximum of 58.4 percent is an outlier. The next highest value is 44.5 percent, almost 25 percent lower. Using an outlier as a goalpost weakens the contribution of this indicator to the index for most states. Statistical table 1 presents the observed values for all indicators.

Unless otherwise indicated in the worked-through example below, dimension indicators are normalized as:

$$\text{Dimension index} = \frac{\text{Actual value} - \text{minimum value}}{\text{maximum value} - \text{minimum value}}$$

Aggregation

Aggregation proceeded in two steps. First, the normalized variables (indicators) were aggregated for each dimension, and second, the three dimensions for the index were aggregated (figure A1.1).

An arithmetic mean was used to aggregate indicator scores within each dimension, and the relative weight of each

indicator in a dimension is inversely proportional to the number of indicators in that dimension.

Missing data

In rare cases, indicator data were missing for certain states. For intimate partner violence, data were unavailable for 17 states, so we substituted the regional average of those values for the 17 states. These are marked with a footnote c in statistical table 1, which lists the states in each region. Again, because state-level data were not available, discriminatory norms and community safety data were collected at the regional level, and thus the state values for those indicators are regional averages. These are also marked with a footnote c in statistical table 1. For gun deaths, states with less than 10 total deaths were rounded to zero.

The index has three dimensions: inclusion, justice, and security. Each dimension has four indicators, for 12 indicators in all. All the indicators are normalized into scores. The four scores in each dimension are calculated as a subindex, and the three subindices are combined to calculate the overall index.

A subindex is generated for each dimension by summing the four indicator scores and taking the arithmetic mean by dividing the sum by the number of indicators:

- *Inclusion subindex* = (Employment score + Working poor score + State legislature score + College degree score)/4.
- *Justice subindex* = (Reproductive healthcare access score + Legal protection score + Discriminatory norms score + Maternal mortality score)/4.
- *Security subindex* = (Intimate partner violence score + Gun deaths score + Healthcare affordability score + Community safety score)/4.

To emphasize that all three dimensions are equally important and that countries are expected to perform well on each dimension, we used a geometric mean to aggregate the three dimension subindices into the overall US WPS Index:

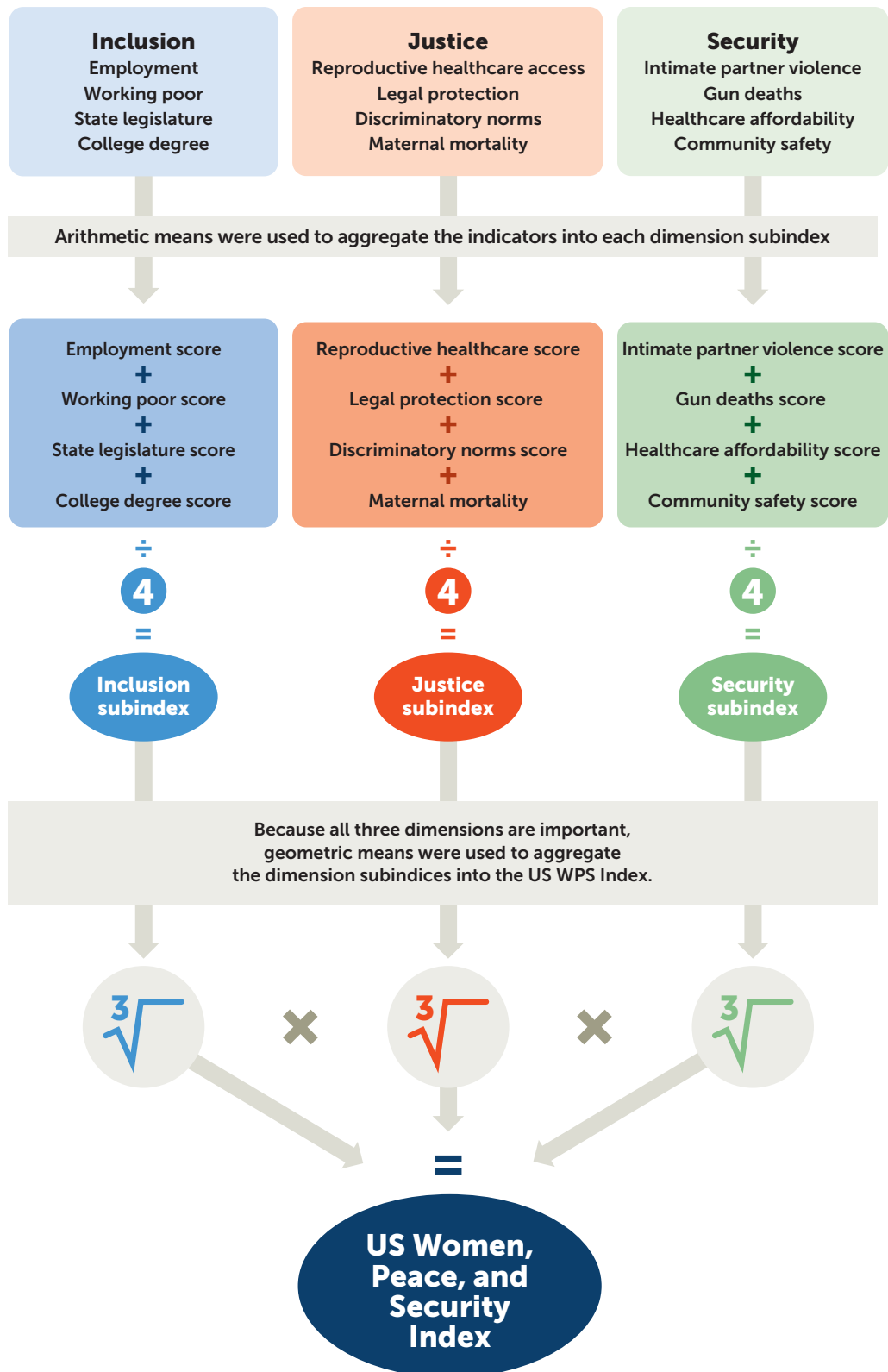
- *US WPS Index* = (Inclusion subindex^{1/3} × Justice subindex^{1/3} × Security subindex^{1/3}).

The geometric mean is often used to aggregate heterogeneous variables with limited substitutability because this method penalizes unequal achievements across dimensions,¹⁸⁵ whereas the arithmetic mean allows for perfect substitutability across dimensions (for example, a very good score on inclusion could fully compensate for a poor score on security).

A worked-through example: Alabama

We use Alabama's scores from statistical table 1 to illustrate the application of this method (table A1.2).

The following calculations show how the arithmetic mean of the indicator scores are normalized and aggregated for each dimension and how the geometric mean is then used to aggregate the three dimension subindices into the overall US WPS index.

FIGURE A1.1 Construction of the US Women, Peace, and Security Index

Source: Authors.

TABLE A1.2 Illustration of aggregation using Alabama as an example

Dimension and indicator	Alabama
Inclusion	
Employment (%)	39.1
Working poor (%)	7.6
State legislature (%)	16.4
College degree (%)	25.9
Justice	
Reproductive healthcare access (%)	41.0
Legal protection (%)	14.3
Discriminatory norms (% of men)	32.1
Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births)	34.5
Security	
Intimate partner violence (%)	8.7
Gun deaths (per 100,000 women)	6.7
Healthcare affordability (%)	82.0
Community safety (%)	40.7

Source: Authors' estimates based on data for Alabama in statistical table 1.

Inclusion dimension

- Employment score = $(39.13 - 30) / (60 - 30) = .3043$
- Working poor score = $(10 - 7.61) / (10 - 2) = .2988$
- State legislature score = $(16.4 - 10) / (50 - 10) = .1600$
- College degree score = $(25.93 - 20) / (50 - 20) = .1977$

Inclusion subindex =

$$(.3043 + .2988 + .16 + .1977) / 4 = .2402$$

Justice dimension

- Reproductive healthcare access score = $41 / 100 = .4100$
- Legal protection score = $14.3 / 100 = .1430$
- Discriminatory norms score = $(50 - 32.13) / (50 - 10) = 0.4468$
- Maternal mortality score = $(60 - 34.5) / (60 - 0) = 0.4250$

Justice subindex =

$$(.41 + .167 + .4468 + .425) / 4 = .3562$$

Security dimension

- Intimate partner violence score = $(11 - 8.7) / (11 - 3) = .2875$
- Gun deaths score = $(7 - 6.66) / 7 = .0490$
- Healthcare affordability score = $(82 - 77) / (95 - 77) = .2778$
- Community safety score = $(40.71 - 40) / (80 - 40) = .0178$

Security subindex =

$$(.2875 + .0490 + .2778 + .0178) / 4 = .1580$$

Alabama's US WPS Index =

$$(.2402 \times .3562 \times .1580)^{1/3} = .238$$

Notes

1. Matias 2019.
2. Klugman et al. forthcoming. See endnote 15 for a description of the survey and sample.
3. **West:** Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington; **Rocky Mountains:** Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah; **Southwest:** Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming; **Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin; **Northeast:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont; **Mid-Atlantic:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania; **Southeast:** Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia.
4. The low-income threshold is set at a \$12 hourly wage or \$25,000 annual income, based on guidance from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
5. For discriminatory norms, state-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.
6. For community safety, state-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.
7. Hess et al. 2015.
8. US Census Bureau 2018.
9. CDC 2019b.
10. Kochhar 2020.
11. We recognize the differences between Hispanic and Latinx, with the former referring to Spanish-speaking populations and the latter referring to communities of Latin American origin. US datasets typically collect information from Hispanic populations, so we use this same terminology throughout the report, unless we are drawing on a source covering Latinx communities specifically.
12. CDC 2020a.
13. Lopez et al. 2020.
14. GIWPS and PRIO 2017, 2019.
15. Klugman et al. forthcoming. The survey by YouGov, analyzed by PerryUndem, was conducted among 2,598 adults ages 18 and older from August 7 to August 18, 2020, using YouGov's nonprobability online panel. The survey sample included oversamples (larger shares than their population shares) of Black and Latinx women nationwide, as well as residents of the two best and two worst performing states. Margins of error apply only to probability-based samples. If this were a probability sample the margin of error would be +2.5 percentage points for the total results. For smaller subsamples, such as state oversamples, the margins of error would be bigger. All quotations in the report are from the survey.
16. Matias 2019.
17. Klugman et al. forthcoming. See endnote 15 for a description of the survey and sample.
18. See endnote 3 for states in each region.
19. The low-income threshold is set at a \$12 hourly wage or \$25,000 annual income, based on guidance from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.
20. For discriminatory norms, state-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.
21. For community safety, state-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.
22. See Klugman, Rodríguez, and Choi (2011) and UNDP (2014).
23. The General Social Survey (GSS) has been conducted since 1972 by the National Data Program for the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, with the support of the National Science Foundation (<http://gss.norc.org/About-The-GSS>). The GSS gathers data on contemporary American society in order to monitor and explain trends and constants in attitudes, behaviors, and attributes.
24. Lloyd and Harwin 2019; CNBC 2019; U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017.
25. McCann 2020.
26. Hess et al. 2015.
27. Klugman et al. forthcoming.
28. See endnote 3 for states in each region.
29. Multiple regression is the extension of ordinary least-squares regression that involves more than one explanatory variable.
30. We used the variance inflation factor (VIF) to check for correlation between independent variables. Preliminary analysis showed a moderate correlation (VIF = less than 5), which is not severe enough to warrant corrective measures (Yoo et al. 2014).

31. For more details on the definition, methodology, and source see statistical table 4.
32. Michener and Brower 2020; Spalter-Roth and Kalb 2019; IWPR 2017; Boteach 2015; Burnette 2017.
33. McGrew 2018.
34. National Partnership for Women & Families 2018.
35. Klugman et al. 2014.
36. Smooth 2018.
37. Pew Research Center 2018.
38. Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
39. Bleiweis 2019.
40. NWLC. 2020.
41. Enda and Gale 2020.
42. Everytown for Gun Safety 2019.
43. Parker et al. 2017.
44. Smith, Fowler, and Niolon 2014.
45. Carnevale, Smith, and Gulish 2018.
46. Carnevale, Smith, and Gulish 2018.
47. Klugman et al. forthcoming.
48. State-level data for Hispanic and Native American women were too sparse to calculate racial and ethnic gaps. See Box 1.3 for more information and statistical table 4 for data available for these groups.
49. Bleiweis 2020.
50. IWPR 2020.
51. TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem 2020.
52. CDC 2019b.
53. Paul et al. 2018.
54. Racial groups are non-Hispanic. Unless Hispanic/Latinx population is specified separately in the text as an ethnicity, Hispanics may be of any race or two or more races.
55. UNICEF 2019.
56. UNICEF 2019.
57. Oppel et al. 2020.
58. TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem. 2020.
59. Hess et al. 2015.
60. Ellingrud et al. 2019.
61. Hess et al. 2015.
62. Shaw and Mason 2020.
63. NWLC 2019.
64. Lean In 2020.
65. NWLC 2017.
66. Neel 2017.
67. Thomas et al. 2019.
68. Hess et al. 2015.
69. Shaw et al. 2016.
70. US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020a.
71. Hess et al. 2015.
72. SHRM 2011; Van Giezen 2012.
73. IWPR 2018.
74. US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020a.
75. US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019.
76. Prosperity Now 2020.
77. Shaw and Tesfaselassie 2020.
78. Lanser 2019.
79. IWPR 2015.
80. CAWP 2020.
81. Based on authors' calculations.
82. CAWP 2019.
83. AAUW 2016.
84. Wax-Thibodeaux 2019.
85. IWPR 2015.
86. Williams and Blinder 2019; the law was blocked by a Federal Judge and is currently not in effect.
87. Reeves 2020.
88. Sanbonmatsu 2020.
89. Sanbonmatsu 2020.
90. CAWP 2020.
91. Emily's List 2020.
92. Cooperman and Crowder-Meyer 2018; Och and Shames 2018.
93. Cooperman and Crowder-Meyer 2018; Och and Shames 2018.
94. Davis 2020.
95. Bacon 2018.
96. Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009; IWPR 2020c; Dittmar 2015.
97. Zernike 2018.
98. Soloman and Maxwell 2019.
99. Reflective Democracy Campaign 2019.
100. Srikanth 2020.
101. Allen 2020.
102. Hess et al. 2015.
103. IWPR and Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2018.
104. Berwick 2019.
105. AAUW 2019.
106. Hernandez 2018.
107. Cohen 2012.
108. For discriminatory norms, state-level data were not available, so we imputed state scores from regional averages taken from the General Social Survey (see appendix). See statistical table 1 note c for states in each region.
109. TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem 2020.
110. Guttmacher Institute 2020.
111. Nash 2019.
112. UNICEF 2019.
113. America's Health Rankings 2019.
114. IWPR 2015.
115. NCHS 2020.
116. Stover and Ross 2009.
117. Douglas-Hall, Kost, and Kavanaugh 2018.
118. Vilda et al. 2019.
119. Davis 2018.
120. America's Health Rankings 2019.
121. IWPR 2015.
122. America's Health Rankings 2019.
123. America's Health Rankings 2019.
124. KFF 2020.
125. Díez et al. 2017.

126. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
127. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
128. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
129. Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018; Díez et al. 2017.
130. CDC 2019a.
131. NCAI 2018.
132. APA 2012.
133. Azziz-Baumgartner et al. 2011; Petrosky et al. 2017.
134. Lee, Thompson, and Mechanic 2002.
135. Lee, Thompson, and Mechanic 2002.
136. Smedley, Stith, and Nelson 2003.
137. Jacobs 2017.
138. Niolon 2017; CDC 2016.
139. Breiding, Ziembroski, and Black 2009.
140. Peek-Asa et al. 2011.
141. Breiding et al. 2014.
142. Sit and Stermac 2017.
143. Kuijpers et al. 2011.
144. HHS, OWS (Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health) 2019.
145. Sit and Stermac 2017.
146. Jarnecke and Flanagan 2020; Raj et al. 2020.
147. Valera 2020.
148. New York State Governor's Office 2020.
149. APA 2012.
150. Huecker and Smock 2020.
151. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a data brief covering results of the 2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, though data were not made publicly available at the state level (CDC 2015).
152. Head to Health 2019.
153. Robinette, Charles, and Gruenewald 2016.
154. Ballard 2019.
155. GIWPS and PRIO 2019.
156. SafeHorizon 2020.
157. UCSD GEH and Stop Street Harassment 2019.
158. Stop Street Harassment 2020.
159. CDC 2020b; Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape 2007.
160. Casteel, Wolfe, and Nguyen 2018.
161. Bonomi et al. 2014.
162. Gallup 2016.
163. Alonzo-Zaldivar 2019.
164. Stolberg 2020.
165. Jones 2020.
166. Oppel et al. 2020.
167. Duncan and Horton 2020.
168. Rodriguez-Diaz et al. 2020.
169. Boerner 2020.
170. King 2020.
171. OHCHR 2020; Tavernise 2020; Smith 2020; Associated Press 2020.
172. Lindberg et al. 2020.
173. Lindberg et al. 2020.
174. Lampert 2020.
175. Gruber, Cupito, and Dobson 2013; NYC Health and Hospitals 2020; Allers 2020.
176. Panchal et al. 2020.
177. Lindberg et al. 2020.
178. Raj et al. 2020.
179. TIME'S UP Foundation and PerryUndem 2020.
180. Matias 2019.
181. CDC 2019b.
182. Gifford's Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence 2018.
183. Klugman, Rodríguez, and Choi 2011; UNDP 2014.
184. Schmidt-Traub et al. 2016.
185. Klugman et al. 2011. A prominent example is the Human Development Index (HDI), which changed its method of aggregation across three dimensions from arithmetic to geometric mean in 2010.

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