
Tiffany Cox
Blair Burnett
Tory Waters
Jonathan Moyer

Status of Women in North Carolina

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This report was compiled by a UNC-Chapel Hill Public Policy capstone team in the spring of 2016 under the guidance of Cassie Holt, the WomenNC Advocacy Chair, and Dr. Jennifer Hazen, lecturer within the UNC Public Policy Department.

OVERVIEW

Through a partnership between the UNC-Chapel Hill Public Policy department and WomenNC, a capstone team comprised of Blair Burnett, Tiffany Cox, Jonathan Moyer, and Tory Waters, worked with Cassie Holt, WomenNC Policy and Advocacy Lead, to develop the following report detailing a comprehensive gender analysis in North Carolina. In coordination with key principles from the United Nations treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), our team has developed a research report on the status of women in North Carolina based upon client feedback on key areas of interest including economics, health, violence against women, and political representation. Drawing from existing status of women reports on North Carolina, as well as statistics published through government agencies such as the NC Department of Health and Human Services and the NC Department of Justice, we identified patterns of gender-based discrimination. As WomenNC seeks to engage government officials in the Triangle area on the potential of local CEDAW ratification, this research will be beneficial towards describing the scope of the status of women throughout North Carolina.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

According to Article 11 of CEDAW, state parties to the treaty must “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights...”¹ These rights extend to employment opportunities, safe working conditions, as well as equal compensation for work of the same value.² However, as of 2016 women in North Carolina continue to face economic hardships including unemployment, a persistent wage gap, and poverty.³ Our analysis demonstrates that policymakers across North Carolina should focus on tackling the severe economic disparities between men and women, as well as among women of different racial and geographic areas within the state.

Compared to their male counterparts, North Carolina women are less likely to participate in the labor force, and are more likely to live below the poverty line.⁴ In 2010, approximately 12 percent of women within the state were unemployed, exceeding the national average of 10 percent.⁵ Additionally, since 2005 women’s labor force participation has decreased from 59.9 to 58.1 percent.⁶ Furthermore, out of the 505,165 family households in North Carolina that are headed by women, 36 percent (or 181,859 households) have incomes below the poverty line.⁷ The amount of women living below the poverty line has seen a 3.1 percent increase since 2004.⁸ Not only has progress for North Carolina women’s economic well-being stagnated in the last decade,⁹ but disparities have begun to increase over time.¹⁰

¹UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 18 December 1979,

²*Ibid.*

³Hess et. al., *The Status of Women*. Institute of Women's Policy Research. January 2013.

⁴National Partnership for Women and Families. *North Carolina Women and the Wage Gap. Report. April 2014.*
<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/2014-nc-wage-gap.pdf>.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Institute for Women’s Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. Washington, DC: IWPR. 2010.

⁹National Partnership for Women and Families. *North Carolina Women and the Wage Gap*.

¹⁰Institute for Women’s Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina*.

The gender wage gap in North Carolina remains a significant economic disparity between men and women within the state.¹¹ Throughout the last five years the pay gap for the average woman in North Carolina has only increased from 81 cents to every dollar paid to their male counterpart¹² to 83 cents to every dollar paid to a man.¹³ Based on the estimated rate of equal pay progress demonstrated between the years 1959 and 2013, women throughout North Carolina are projected to not see equal pay until the year 2064.¹⁴

Women within North Carolina experience significant economic disparities based upon their race and ethnicity.¹⁵ For example, the median annual earnings for women in full time, year-round positions in 2015 was \$35,000, while for women of color in North Carolina, the median annual earnings in 2015 was \$29,366.¹⁶ When examining the gender wage gap, Hispanic/Latino women make only 49 cents for every dollar a white male makes, compared to the 83 cents that their white counterparts make.¹⁷ Among all women in North Carolina, Hispanic/Latino women are 64 percent more likely to be poor or near the poverty line.¹⁸ In comparison, American Indian women are 54 percent more likely, and black women are 52 percent more likely to be poor, or near the poverty line, compared to their white and Asian American counterparts.¹⁹ Appendix A demonstrates the breakdown of the economic status of women in North Carolina by racial categories.

Finally, the level of economic disparity within the state varies by geographic location. Within Raleigh, the capital of the state, adult women have a poverty rate of 13 percent.²⁰ However, women in rural areas of North Carolina endure larger barriers to economic advancement as they face lower levels of education, lower earnings, and higher poverty rates, compared to urban areas within the state.²¹ For example, in more rural areas, such as Ashe,

¹¹ Hess et al.

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ Institute for Women's Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina*.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ Center for American Progress Action Fund. *The State of Women in North Carolina*. 2013.

¹⁸ Hess et. al.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ *Ibid*.

Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey, one in five women above the age of 18 lives at or below the federal poverty line.²²

Overall, women in North Carolina continue to face extreme economic discrimination in a variety of areas outlined by Article 11 of CEDAW.²³ Given the current predictions on the rate of economic progress for women within North Carolina,²⁴ we do not expect to see positive growth in the discussed areas in the near future. Policy-makers intending to improve the economic status of women in North Carolina should begin to address issues related to the stagnant wage gap, and the increasing disparities based on gender, race and ethnicity, and geographic location.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

1. Economic disparities for women in North Carolina are based upon gender, race, and geographic location. Minority women and women from rural areas face the heaviest economic burden in areas related to the wage gap and poverty.
2. A significant wage gap for women in North Carolina persists. Current rates of progress predict that the wage gap will not be eliminated until the year 2064 for the average North Carolina woman.
3. Poverty also remains a significant challenge for women within the state, particularly for minority women, who on average, are more likely to be close or at the poverty level than their white counterparts.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ UN General Assembly.

²⁴ Institute for Women's Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina.*

HEALTH

According to Article 12 of CEDAW, all state parties to the treaty “ shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.”²⁵ Disparities relating to access to overall health care and services are visible when the data is disaggregated and broken down by gender as well as race and ethnicity.

Traditional social safety net support is often available to individuals through workplace benefits, such as paid time off or family leave.²⁶ Unfortunately, while most families below the federal poverty line in North Carolina qualify for social safety net support through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other cash assistance programs, very few actually receive these benefits.²⁷ For example, the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) social safety support program has an eligibility versus coverage gap²⁸ in North Carolina; only 55.8 percent of those eligible are receiving WIC assistance.²⁹ This is currently below the regional coverage rate of 58 percent as well as the national coverage rate of 60 percent.³⁰ According to a 2010 report from the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) “in North Carolina, seven percent of families in poverty with young children receive Work First benefits.”³¹ Disaggregating the assistance awarded by family type shows that only 12 percent of qualifying households run by single women in North Carolina

²⁵ UN General Assembly.

²⁶ Institute for Women’s Policy Research. (2010). *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. Washington, DC: IWPR.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis, *National and State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles and Program Reach, 2011*, by Paul Johnson, Linda Giannarelli, Erika Huber, and David Betson. Alexandria, VA: March, 2014

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Institute for Women’s Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. (2010).

receive public cash assistance.³² This number is significantly lower than the national average and has been for the past ten years.³³

Access to health care coverage in the state of North Carolina is often used as a first-line indicator for men and women to maintain healthy lifestyles. According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), about 80 percent of North Carolina's total population has access to health insurance coverage as of 2013.³⁴ Data also shows that 82 percent of women in North Carolina had health insurance coverage in 2014.³⁵ Of the almost 18 percent of women in North Carolina without health insurance, those most likely to not have health care coverage are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander.³⁶ Insurance coverage data for North Carolina women was last collected in 2014 and shows Hispanic/Latino women within the state as the least likely to have some sort of health insurance coverage, only 34 percent have coverage; whereas, white women within the state of North Carolina have about 82 percent insurance coverage.³⁷ Health insurance coverage is essential for North Carolina citizens to be able to take ownership of a healthy life.

Chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and pulmonary diseases are the leading causes of death within North Carolina, yet these are also the diseases that are most preventable with adequate care.³⁸ Within North Carolina rates of chronic disease are higher for men than for women.³⁹ However, among women in the state, there is a racial and ethnic discrepancy within mortality rates for chronic diseases.⁴⁰ Caucasian and African American women in North Carolina are more likely to be diagnosed and die from a chronic disease than women of other races or ethnicities in North Carolina.⁴¹ Specifically, Asian American and

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Health Insurance. Retrieved from North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, State Center for Health Statistics website: www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS.

³⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health. (2014). *Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook 2014 Edition*. Washington, DC: DHHS Office on Women's Health.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ UNC Center for Women's Health Research. (2014). *2014 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Center for Women's Health Research.

³⁹ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2010). *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. Washington, DC: IWPR.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health. (2014). *Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook 2014 Edition*. (2014).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Hispanic women within North Carolina have very low prevalence and diagnosis rates of chronic disease.⁴²

Prevalence of heart disease and diabetes among women in North Carolina is high and these chronic diseases are two of the leading causes of death in North Carolina.⁴³ Despite the large age-adjusted mortality rate from heart disease for women in North Carolina of 153.6 per 100,000, North Carolina is still below the national average for women's heart disease mortality rate, 161 per 100,000.⁴⁴ Diabetes is a large-scale health issue within North Carolina as a cause of heart attack and stroke and a leading cause of death for both men and women.⁴⁵ About ten percent of women in North Carolina have dealt with diabetes, higher than the national average for women.⁴⁶ Additionally, within the last three years over 60 percent of women in North Carolina have either been tested for diabetes or high blood sugar.⁴⁷ With disaggregation of the data, mortality rates from diabetes for women in North Carolina can be attributed to the large variance of the disease across racial and ethnic groups.⁴⁸ Black and Native American women within North Carolina have the highest incidence of diabetes within the state (50 per 100,000 for black women and 45.1 per 100,000 for Native American women), as compared to data on white and Hispanic women within North Carolina.⁴⁹ With over half of the women in North Carolina currently suffering from one or more chronic diseases, it is imperative that policymakers examining the status of women's health in North Carolina analyze potential interventions for chronic disease management that are sensitive to the racial and ethnic incidence rates highlighted in this report.⁵⁰

After the 2013 long session of the North Carolina state legislature, North Carolina Women United produced a "report card" to evaluate the potential legislative effects on North Carolina women and their access to reproductive rights and care.⁵¹ Below are specific pieces of

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ UNC Center for Women's Health Research. (2014). *2014 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Center for Women's Health Research.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2010). *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. Washington, DC: IWPR.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ UNC Center for Women's Health Research. (2014). *2014 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Center for Women's Health Research.

⁵¹ North Carolina Women United. (2013). *Legislative Report Card 2013 Long Session*. Raleigh, NC: NCWU.

legislation from the NCWU report that have been regarded as setbacks to advancements in sexual and reproductive health and rights for women with North Carolina.⁵²

- SB132: Passed in May of 2013, this NC Senate Bill allows instruction of one-sided, pro-life, information relating to the effects of abortions and abortion care in public schools.⁵³
- SB353: Passed in July of 2013, this NC Senate bill has set new standards for clinics providing abortion care, including allowing any health care clinic employee to refuse to participate in abortion services. In addition, this bill does not permit women in North Carolina to obtain abortion services through the federal health exchange.⁵⁴
- SB402: Passed in July of 2013, this NC Senate bill appropriated \$250,000 of taxpayer money towards the development of Crisis Pregnancy Centers within the state. According to NCWU, these centers share one-sided, pro-life, information about abortion, such as “abortion causes breast cancer; abortion is psychologically damaging; and abortion can lead to sterility, eventual pre-term births, and even death.”⁵⁵
- HB647: Because this NC House bill has not yet been signed into law, discrimination against North Carolina teachers and employees in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity is still legal in the state.⁵⁶

Key principles of CEDAW (Article 12) relating to the fight against discrimination against women as it relates to health focus primarily on family planning and reproductive rights.⁵⁷ Within North Carolina, it is apparent that the family planning and specific reproductive rights of women are under scrutiny from the state legislature with the passage of many new laws addressing reproductive health and access to care.⁵⁸ Without dutiful attention to all aspects of women’s health, including, but not limited to, health care coverage, common disease threats, as

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ North Carolina Women United. (2013). *Legislative Report Card 2013 Long Session*. Raleigh, NC: NCWU.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13.

⁵⁸ North Carolina Women United. (2013). *Legislative Report Card 2013 Long Session*. Raleigh, NC: NCWU.

well as protection of reproductive rights, discrimination against women and a right to health will be present.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

1. There is strong evidence that exists an eligibility versus coverage gap for social safety net support exists for women within North Carolina.
2. The leading causes of death for women in North Carolina every year are heart disease, cancer, and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases. While cancer poses a difficult challenge for treatment, most chronic diseases are preventable with early detection and actionable lifestyle changes.
3. Recent legislation within the North Carolina state legislature has made access to reproductive and sexual health care for women increasingly difficult, underscoring the need for prompt action to ensure the maintenance of women's health rights codified within the key family planning principles of CEDAW.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Though not explicitly mentioned in the text of CEDAW, violence against women impacts their capability to thrive within a community. A woman who is a victim of violence is likely to suffer physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Women experience disproportionate levels of sexual violence in the forms of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in comparison to men.

For the purposes of this report, domestic violence refers to a partner attempting to control the other with physical, sexual, verbal, or psychological tactics, and this abuse can take place during the relationship or after the relationship.⁵⁹ The North Carolina Council for Women funds centers designated to treat victims of domestic violence across the state, and the Council also collects statistics on the number of calls and clients each center receives. During the 2014-15 fiscal year, 44,383 women were clients of domestic violence services, compared to 9,478 males in North Carolina.⁶⁰ Women comprise a disproportionate amount of clients of domestic violence centers in the state of North Carolina, a trend that has persisted since the collection of statistics began.

Instances of domestic violence can result in fatal situations, taking either the form of homicide or murder-suicide. Domestic violence-related homicide accounts for a noticeably greater percentage of homicides with female victims than homicides involving male victims. Between 2008 and 2013, female victims of domestic violence-related homicides made up 47% to 69% of total female homicide victims.⁶¹ Male victims of domestic violence, on the other hand, represented only 12% of total male homicide fatalities.⁶² Although the number of female homicide deaths decreased from 2011 to 2013, the number of female victims of domestic violence homicides has not changed significantly (see Appendix C for yearly data on domestic

⁵⁹ “Domestic Violence Information,” North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, accessed Feb 2016, <http://www.nccadv.org/get-help/domestic-violence-information>

⁶⁰ “State of North Carolina Women Statistics,” North Carolina Council for Women, accessed Feb 2016, <http://ncadmin.nc.gov/about-doa/divisions/council-for-women/women-statistics>

⁶¹ “Domestic Violence Statistics,” North Carolina Department of Justice, accessed Feb 2016, <http://www.ncdoj.gov/Help-for-Victims/Domestic-Violence-Victims/Domestic-Violence-Statistics.aspx>

⁶² *Ibid.*

violence-related homicides).⁶³ While there has been some improvement in rates of homicides with female victims in general, the prevalence of domestic violence-related homicides for both genders has not decreased. Similar patterns are seen in the number of clients who have experienced sexual assault, which the North Carolina Department of Justice defines as “sexual contact by force and without consent.”⁶⁴ In the 2014-15 fiscal year, 13,655 clients in North Carolina used services after experiencing sexual assault, and 11,820 - 87% - of the clients were female.⁶⁵ For the past six years, the number of male victims of sexual assault has slowly risen while the number of female victims has largely remained the same (see Appendix C for yearly statistics on sexual assault). Thus, rates of sexual violence have persisted for women and increased for men, which demonstrates the need for the state legislature to target additional resources toward programs for victims of sexual violence.

In 2014, two researchers at UNC-Charlotte estimated the cost of domestic violence to the state of North Carolina by calculating the value of lost life, work, and property along with health care and incarceration costs. They found domestic violence cost the state \$307,856,298 each year.⁶⁶ Despite this cost, the state legislature has not increased the budget for domestic violence services after it cut \$243,000 dollars from the budget for domestic violence centers in 2010.⁶⁷ A 2015 survey of domestic violence services in North Carolina illuminates the implications of the loss in funding for domestic violence centers. 25% of domestic violence centers reported cuts in funding from the government, and 27 staff positions had been eliminated in the past year.⁶⁸

Human trafficking entails holding individuals against their will and compelling them to engage in commercial sex acts or forced labor. The National Human Trafficking Center reported 326 cases of human trafficking in North Carolina in the past three years, and of these 326 cases,

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ “Summary of North Carolina Criminal Statutes: Sexual Violence Crimes,” North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, last modified March 2011, <http://www.nccasa.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/SUMMARY-OF-NORTH-CAROLINA-SEX-CRIMES-as-of-March-2011-1.pdf>

⁶⁵ “State of North Carolina Women Statistics.”

⁶⁶ Cleve R. Wootson Jr., “Study: Domestic Violence Costs NC \$308 Million a Year,” *The Charlotte Observer*, October 23, 2014, accessed Mar 2016, <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/crime/article9205517.html>

⁶⁷ “Legislative Summaries,” North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, accessed Feb 2016, <http://www.nccadv.org/public-policy/legislative-summaries>

⁶⁸ “Domestic Violence Counts: North Carolina Summary,” National Network to End Domestic Violence, accessed Feb 2016, http://nncadv.org/downloads/Census/DVCounts2015/North_Carolina.pdf

79% of the victims were female.⁶⁹ It is worth noting there is a trend of underreporting domestic violence and sex-based crimes for fear of future violence or reproach from society, which has implications for a reliable assessment of the status of violence against women. Regardless, the patterns of the number of domestic violence clients, domestic violence-related homicide victims, sexual assault clients, and human trafficking cases indicate that the prevalence of sexual violence has persisted for women in the state of North Carolina and shows no signs of improving.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

1. Women in North Carolina are the victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking at disproportionately higher rates than men, and these patterns have persisted since the collection of statistics on sexual violence in North Carolina began.
2. Domestic violence-related homicides account for a noticeably greater percentage of total female homicide victims than for total male homicide victims.
3. The North Carolina state legislature has not increased funding for domestic violence programs since 2010, and a quarter of domestic violence centers reported a loss of funding in 2015. The annual cost of domestic violence to the state of North Carolina far outstrips government funding allocated to centers addressing sexual violence.

⁶⁹ “North Carolina,” National Human Trafficking Center, accessed Feb 2016, <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/state/north-carolina>

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Article 7 of CEDAW outlines the rights of women to vote and hold public office on equal terms with men.⁷⁰ While women are afforded these rights in the United States, there is still a disparity between the rate at which women vote and the rate at which those voters are represented by women in government. North Carolina at present does not adequately represent women voters in the state, either in the General Assembly or in localities statewide. This section analyzes those disparities, and examines why they may exist.

Women in North Carolina are as politically active as men when it comes to voter registration and voter turnout. According to a 2015 gender analysis study published by Meredith College, women comprise 54 percent of the state's registered voters.⁷¹ They also turn out to vote in higher numbers than men - in the 2008 and 2010 elections, about 69 percent of eligible female voters participated as opposed to about 66 percent of eligible male voters.⁷² Not only are more women registered to vote than men in the state, they also turn out to vote in elections in higher rates than men do. In addition, women who run for office are as successful as male candidates. In the 2014 elections, women won 63 percent of their races, on average.⁷³

Despite high success rates for women candidates, they only made up 25 percent of candidates overall, and so this did little to close the gender gap in government.⁷⁴ In addition to this, women only hold 25 percent of public offices in the state. In the General Assembly Senate and House of Representatives, as well as judicial offices and state boards, this percentage is often even lower.⁷⁵ Women comprise only 38 of 170 seats, or 22.4 percent, in the General Assembly, and women of color hold only 12 of those seats.^{76,77} This places North Carolina above average, ranking 8th for percentage of black women in state legislature.⁷⁸ Even so, black women have

⁷⁰ UN General Assembly.

⁷¹ David B. McLennan, *The Status of Women in North Carolina Politics* (Meredith College, 2015), 4.

⁷² Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Status of Women..."

⁷³ McLennan, *The Status of Women in North Carolina Politics*, 18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Women in State Legislature 2015* (The Center for American Women in Politics, 2015).

⁷⁷ Kelly Dittmar, "Voices. Votes. Leadership. The Status of Black Women in American Politics 2015," (Center for American Women and Politics, 2015), 18.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

only been 2.3 percent of candidates for elected office since 2004.⁷⁹ Compared to other states, North Carolina has a long way to go—they rank 31st for number of women in state legislature.⁸⁰ In order to improve this ranking, it is important to determine what gets women involved in politics.

The data above show that when women run, they often succeed. The issue lies in the fact that women are not running for office in high numbers, even though they participate in other aspects of democracy at rates equal to men. Research suggests that the reason women do not run for office is because they are not taught to believe they can from an early age. In childhood, young women are less likely to be encouraged by their parents to run for office, and more likely to be discouraged, than young men are.⁸¹ Even among women educated to at least an undergraduate level, they are less likely to be informed or involved in politics.⁸² Long-lasting effects of discrimination against women prevents them from believing they can succeed in political careers. For example, men occupy political office at higher proportions than women do, and they are more likely to win subsequent elections for their seat because of an incumbency advantage. Thus, it is more difficult for female candidates to win if they are challenging a male incumbent. Women also do not hold as many jobs that lead directly into political careers, such as business executives or lawyers, as men do.⁸³

Researchers Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox identified political ambition as one of the key reasons why there is a gender gap in terms of political office. Their initial survey of nationwide college students revealed that 63 percent of women had never considered running for political office, compared to just 43 percent of men. In addition, men were twice as likely as women to have strongly considered running for office.⁸⁴ The two researchers also identified five main reasons why women do not have the same level of political ambition, including lack of exposure to politics, lack of encouragement, and lack of confidence. For example, men were 60 percent more likely to consider themselves very qualified for a position in government, whereas women were 50 percent more likely to doubt their qualifications.⁸⁵ Even though women are

⁷⁹ McLennan, *The Status of Women in North Carolina Politics*, 6-7.

⁸⁰ *Women in State Legislature 2015*.

⁸¹ Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox, *Girls Just Wanna Not Run: The Gender Gap in Young Americans' Political Ambition*, (Washington, DC: Women & Politics Institute, 2013), 7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸³ McLennan, *The Status of Women in North Carolina Politics*, 17.

⁸⁴ Lawless and Fox, *Girls Just Wanna Not Run*, 2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

afforded the same rights as men with regards to government participation, it is important that representative governments reflect the populations they intend to represent. Overall, encouraging women of their ability and exposing them to political discussion could lead them to run for office and pursue political careers.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

1. Women vote in higher numbers than men, but they do not hold the same proportion of seats in public offices or the state legislature.
2. When women do run for political office, they tend to win. In North Carolina in 2014, women won a majority of the elections in which they ran. Still, women were only one-fourth of all candidates during that election.
3. Women are socially discouraged from participating in politics at a young age and are less likely to consider themselves qualified for office than men. They are also less likely to be encouraged to run for office or to pursue a career in politics or law.

CONCLUSION

Given the status of women in North Carolina laid out in this report, there are many avenues for advocacy efforts in the near future. The research on the status of women in North Carolina illuminates a gender gap in the following areas of concern: employment and wages, health insurance and social safety net, sexual violence, and political representation. Regarding women's health and economic status within the state, policymakers should take into account disparities based not only on gender, but race and geographic location as well. Violence against women in North Carolina poses a unique health threat. The persistent rate of sexual violence shows no signs of improving for either gender. Furthermore, the state legislature has not increased funding for centers serving victims of sexual violence since 2010. Despite the high rate of voter turnout among women in North Carolina, women are not running for political office at the same rates as men are. WomenNC, as well as members of the broader North Carolina coalition for Cities for CEDAW, can utilize this report to emphasize these key areas of concern when speaking to the status of women within the state, as well as opportunities for growth with future advocacy efforts.

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APPENDIX A - ECONOMIC DATA

Table 1. Employment and Earnings by Race/Ethnicity (Status of Women).

Employment and Earnings	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Native American	Other/Two or more
Women's Median Annual Earnings (Full-Time, Year-Round), 2011-2013	\$37,283	\$22,800	\$30,034	\$34,000	\$28,000	\$32,000
Ratio of Women's to White Men's Earnings, 2011-2013	77.7%	47.5%	62.6%	70.8%	58.3%	66.7%
Women's Labor Force Participation 2011-2013	56.5%	59.2%	63.2%	58.7%	52.3%	61.6%
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations	44.8%	18.9%	32.2%	46.2%	31.9%	34.5%

Institute for Women's Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. Washington, DC: IWPR. 2010.

Table 2. Households Receiving Public Cash Assistance in North Carolina and US, 2010

	Percent of Households in NC Receiving Public Cash Assistance, 2010	Percent of Households in US Receiving Public Cash Assistance, 2010	Percent of Households in NC Receiving SNAP (Food Stamps), 2010	Percent of Households in US Receiving SNAP (Food Stamps), 2010
All Households	7 percent	9 percent	13 percent	12 percent
Married-Couple Households	3 percent	4 percent	7 percent	7 percent
Households headed by Single Women	12 percent	16 percent	40 percent	34 percent
Households headed by Single Men	2 percent	3 percent	23 percent	20 percent

Institute for Women's Policy Research. *The Status of Women in North Carolina*. Washington, DC: IWPR. 2010.

APPENDIX B - HEALTH DATA

Table 1. Female Health Insurance Coverage 2011

	Percent of Health Insurance Coverage for NC Women (2011) (18-64)
Non- Hispanic White	82.2
Non-Hispanic Black	73.0
Hispanic	36.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	72.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	82.4
All Women	77.2

North Carolina Profile, from 2013 Edition of Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook:
http://www.healthstatus2020.com/chartbook/images/Chartbook_2013Edition.pdf

APPENDIX C - VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DATA

Table 1. Clients of Domestic Violence Services in NC

Year	Female Clients	Male Clients
2014-15	44,383	9,478
2013-14	46,126	9,148
2012-13	47,849	9,496
2011-12	43,823	7,740
2010-11	51,701	9,582
2009-10	56,161	10,159

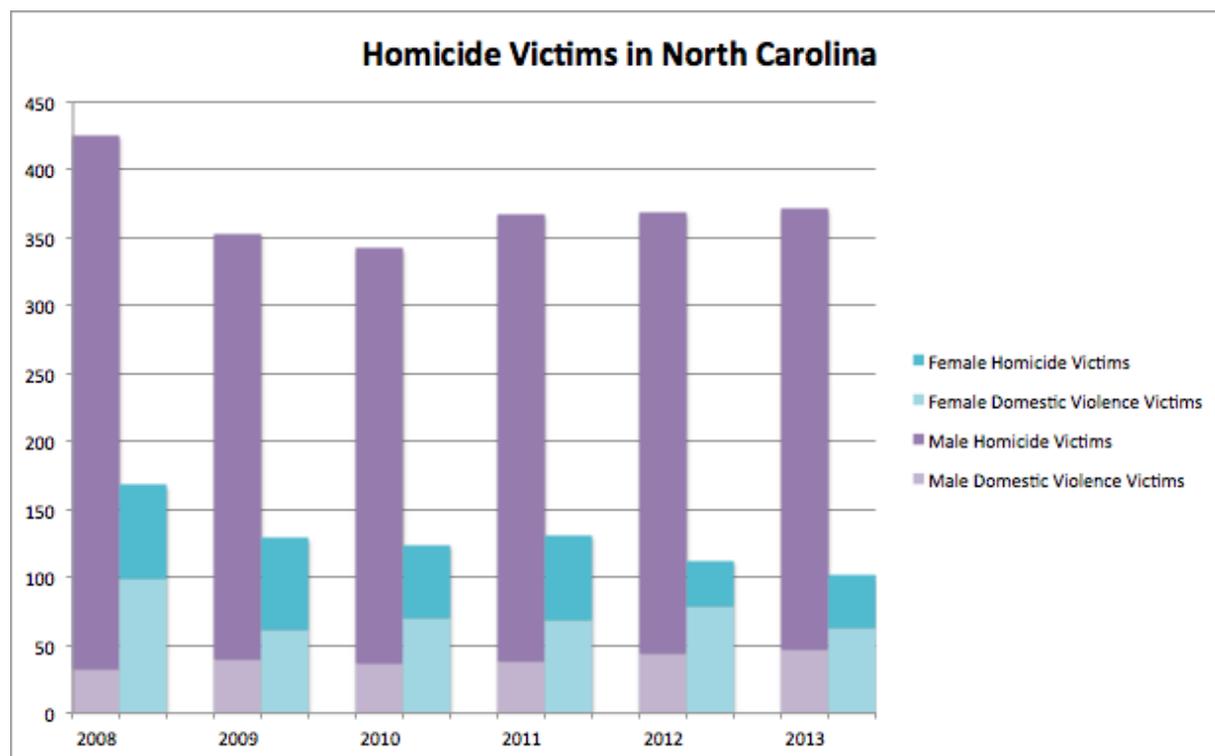
“State of North Carolina Women Statistics,” North Carolina Council for Women.

Table 2. Domestic Violence Homicides

Year	Female Domestic Violence Homicide Victims	Female Homicide Victims	Male Victims of Domestic Violence Homicide	Male Homicide Victims
2013	62	101	46	371
2012	78	112	44	368
2011	68	131	38	367
2010	70	124	37	342
2009	61	129	39	353
2008	99	168	32	425

“Domestic Violence Statistics,” North Carolina Department of Justice

Figure 1. Domestic Violence Homicides



“Domestic Violence Statistics,” North Carolina Department of Justice

Table 3. Clients of Sexual Assault Services

Year	Female Clients	Male Clients
2014-15	11,820	1,830
2013-14	12,049	1,687
2012-13	11,524	1,447
2011-12	11,669	1,545
2010-11	12,306	1,575
2009-10	12,038	1,354

“State of North Carolina Women Statistics,” North Carolina Council for Women.