

# THE LOUISIANA SURVEY 2017

**LSU**

Manship School of  
Mass Communication  
Reilly Center For  
Media & Public Affairs



## Large Majority Favors Equal Pay

Partisan Gaps generally Exceed Gender Gaps in Views of  
Discrimination

*The fourth in a series of six reports from the 2017 Louisiana Survey*



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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

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# Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, an integral part of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication, uses the intellectual muscle of the school's faculty to help solve practical problems and advance good government initiatives. The Reilly Center's mission is to generate thoughtful programs, dialogue, and research about social, economic, and political affairs, as well as the developing role of the media in American society. The Center is committed to advancing the Manship School's national leadership in media and politics.

The Center's agenda is diverse and fluid – from the annual John Breaux Symposium, which brings in national experts to discuss a topic that has received little or no attention, to conducting the annual *Louisiana Survey*, a vital resource for policymakers, which tracks advancements and regressions of citizen attitudes about state services. The Center's role, within the state's flagship university, is to respond quickly to the needs of state governance in addressing challenges facing Louisiana, particularly in times of crisis such as during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Its action-oriented and partnership-driven philosophy underscores the Reilly Center's dedication to tackling ideas and issues that explore the relationship of media and the public in democratic society.

# About the Louisiana Survey

The *2017 Louisiana Survey* is the sixteenth in an annual series sponsored by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

The mission of the *Louisiana Survey* is to establish benchmarks as well as to capture change in residents' assessments of state government services. The survey is further dedicated to tracking public opinion on the contemporary policy issues that face the state. Each iteration of the *Louisiana Survey* contains core items designed to serve as barometers of public sentiment, including assessments of whether the state is heading in the right direction or wrong direction, perceptions about the most important problems facing the state, as well as evaluations of public revenue sources and spending priorities.

In the *2017 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented by measures of support for current fiscal reform proposals as well as potential changes to the state's gasoline tax; support for changing the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS); public opinion on criminal justice reform proposals; beliefs about gender discrimination and equal pay; attitudes toward Medicaid expansion and the federal Affordable Care Act; and opinions on a variety of social issues such as religious freedom laws and rights of transgender individuals.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty in the Public Administration Institute, the Department of Political Science, and the Manship School of Mass Communication. These faculty members provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the contemporary policy questions that could most benefit from an understanding of the public's views. While we are indebted to them for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for any mistakes in the questionnaire, analysis, or interpretation presented in this report.

We especially thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the Louisiana Survey.

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## Overview

Most Louisiana residents believe society continues to fall short of gender equality in the workplace and favor a proposal to require employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same job. The *2017 Louisiana Survey*, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at LSU's Manship School of Mass Communication, shows that:

- There is very little opposition to the concept of equal pay among Louisiana residents. Approximately nine in ten (91 percent) of Louisiana residents support the *state requiring* employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same work. This support is broadly shared across a number of demographic and political characteristics.
- About one of third (32 percent) of state residents say there is a lot of discrimination against women in our society today. A similar share say there is some discrimination, while 24 percent say there is only a little and 11 percent say there is none at all.
- Most Louisiana residents (71 percent) think the country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace. A majority (58 percent) think there are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men.
- Generally, gaps between Democrats and Republicans exceed gaps between men and women on views of discrimination and obstacles women face in society or the workplace. For example, majorities of both Republican women (54 percent) and Republican men (63 percent) think the obstacles that made it harder for women to get ahead are largely gone. Democratic women and Democratic men stand together on the other side – believing that significant obstacles remain – at 80 percent and 70 percent, respectively.

The *2017 Louisiana Survey* was administered over the telephone from February 23 to March 23, 2017, to both landline and cell phone respondents. The project includes a representative sample of 1,012 adult Louisiana residents. The total sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

This is the fourth in a series of six releases on results from the *2017 Louisiana Survey*.

## Most Think State Government Should Require Equal Pay

There is very little opposition to the concept of equal pay among Louisiana residents. Approximately nine in ten (91 percent) of Louisiana residents support the *state requiring* employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same job (figure 1). The wording of this question specifically focuses on language for a government mandate to employers. This wording is used so respondents will consider the role of government in employers' compensation of their employees, rather than focusing solely on beliefs about what employers should do voluntarily.

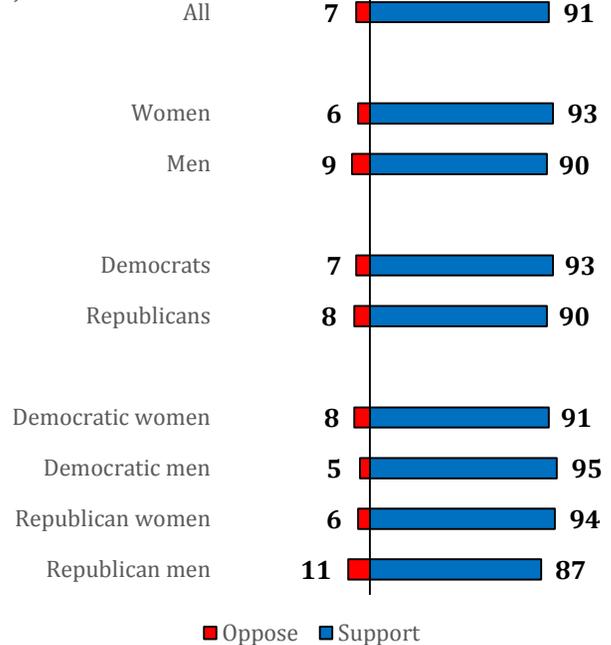
This support is broadly shared across a number of demographic and political characteristics. For example, there is no significant difference between women and men on this issue. Similarly, Democrats and Republicans agree on requiring equal pay for the same job.

## Partisan Gaps Often Exceed Gender Differences in views of Discrimination

About one third (32 percent) of state residents say there is a lot of discrimination against women in our society today (figure 2). A similar share say there is some discrimination, while 24 percent say there is only a little and 11 percent say there

**Figure 1: Broad Support Across Gender and Parties for Equal Pay Requirement**

Percent who support/oppose state requiring employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same job

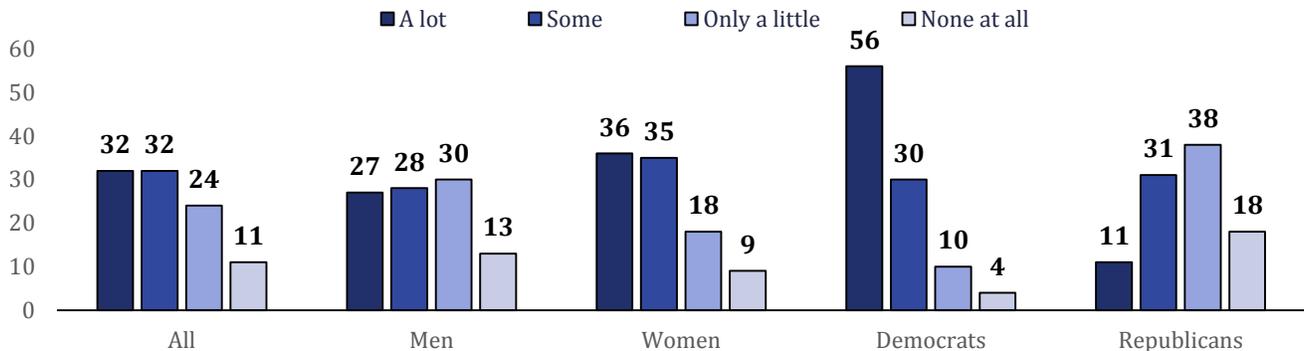


SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

is none at all. More women than men say there is a lot or some discrimination – 36 percent and 25 percent versus 27 percent and 28 percent, respectively. The gap between Democrats and Republicans is even larger. A majority of Democrats (56 percent) say women face a lot of discrimination, while just 11 percent of Republicans think so.

**Figure 2: Partisan Gap Exceeds Gender Gap in Perceptions of Discrimination Against Women**

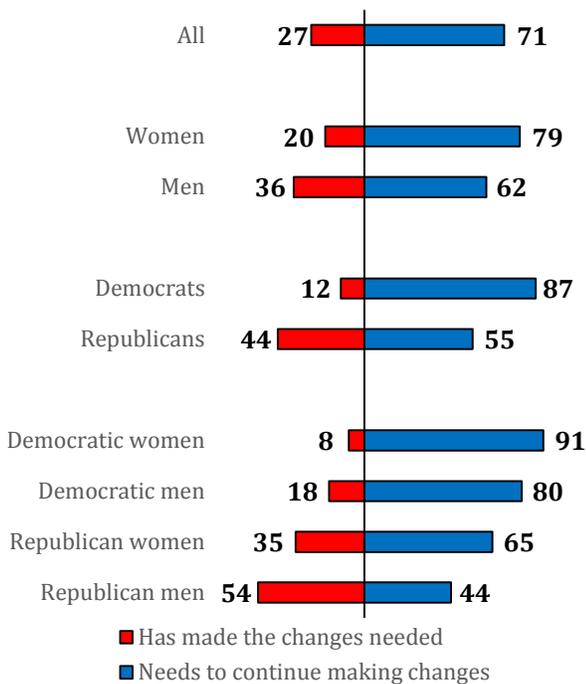
Percent who say \_\_\_\_\_ when asked how much discrimination there is against women in our society today



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

**Figure 3: Gender and Partisan Differences in Views of Equality in Workplace**

Percent who say the country \_\_\_\_\_ to give men and women equality in workplace



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

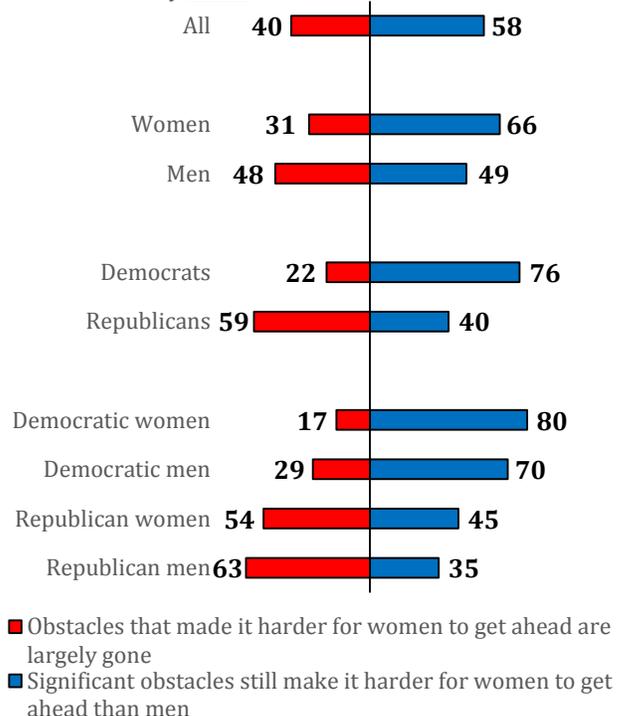
A similar pattern appears in views of equality in the workplace. The survey asked respondents to choose the statement that comes closest to their views from this pair: “This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace,” or “This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace.”

Overall, most Louisiana residents (71 percent) think the country needs to continue making changes. While majorities of both women and men think further changes are needed for workplace equality, there is a 17 percentage point gender gap in these views (figure 3). The gap is nearly twice as big (32 percent) between Democrats and Republicans.

The gender difference shows up within both parties, but is larger among Republicans than Democrats. The share of Democratic women who think more changes are necessary is 11 percentage points higher than the share of

**Figure 4: Large Partisan Differences in Views of Obstacles Women Face**

Percent who say \_\_\_\_\_



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Democratic men. The share of Republican women is 21 percentage points greater than the share of Republican men. In fact, a majority of Republican men (54 percent) think the country has already made the changes necessary for workplace gender equality.

The difference is smaller between Republican women and Republican men in their views of the obstacles women face. The survey included a second question forcing respondents to choose between the following statements: “The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone,” or “There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men.” Majorities of both Republican women (54 percent) and Republican men (63 percent) think the obstacles that made it harder for women to get ahead are largely gone (figure 4). Democratic women and Democratic men stand together on the other side – believing that significant obstacles remain – at 80 percent and 70 percent, respectively.

# Survey Methodology

The data in this report were collected from a randomly selected sample of adult (18 years or older) residents of Louisiana via telephone interviews conducted from February 23 through March 23, 2017. The project includes live-interviewer surveys of 414 respondents contacted via landline telephone and 598 respondents contacted via cell phone, for a total sample of 1,012 respondents. The design of the landline sample ensures representation of both listed and unlisted numbers by use of random digit dialing. The cell phone sample is randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service.

The response rate is ten percent. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephone surveys have declined for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research organizations. The response rate for this survey is within the typical range for reputable live-interviewer telephone survey firms.

The combined landline and cell phone sample is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2015 one-year estimates. The sample is also weighted for population density by parish. Weighting cannot eliminate every source of nonresponse bias. However, proper administration of random sampling combined with accepted weighting techniques has a strong record of yielding unbiased results.

The sample has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, as accounted for through the margin of error, readers should recognize that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab, a division of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, designed the survey questionnaire and sampling strategy, conducted telephone interviews, computed the survey weights, and conducted all statistical analysis.

# Question Wording & Toplines

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, results are for the total sample. Not all respondents were asked each question, and questions asked to a subset of respondents are labelled accordingly. For these questions, percentages are for only those respondents who were asked the particular question. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Q1.

How much discrimination would you say there is in our society today against women?

A lot	32
Some	32
Only a little	24
None at all	11
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1

Q2.

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace	27
This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace	71
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q3.

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone	40
There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men	58
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q4.

Do you support or oppose the state requiring employers in Louisiana to pay men and women the same amount for the same job?

Support	91
Oppose	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1