



Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>

Correction request: PF Wisconsin and the gender pay gap

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
To: truthometer@politifact.com

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Dear Truth-O-Meter,

PolitiFact Wisconsin's [Dec. 16, 2022](#) fact check on the gender wage gap continues to wallow in your incoherent pay gap "jurisprudence."

Your ratings are wildly inconsistent, which would be okay if you admitted they are "[entirely subjective](#)." But you don't admit that. Instead, [you claim PolitiFact isn't biased](#). You can't have it both ways.

PolitiFact Wisconsin continued some of the worst inconsistency on the gender (& Latina) wage gap issue [on Dec. 16, 2022](#). Sen. Tammy Baldwin (Democrat) gave a figure for the raw gender/Latina gap and used it in context to illustrate the need for "equal pay for equal work" legislation.

The article even quotes it (I've added bold emphasis):

"On Latina Equal Pay Day, we bring attention to the fact that Latina workers make 54 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. **It's past time that Latina workers are given equal pay for equal work.**"

Are Latinas doing the same jobs as the white men making almost twice as much at the median (not average, as your fact check reports)? That's not in the data and you know it. It's a comparison irrespective of job and somewhat insensitive to hours worked.

Yet PolitiFact Wisconsin gifted Sen. Baldwin with a "True" rating. Doubtless PolitiFact Wisconsin found a precedent that matched its fact check. That's easy enough to do with your ratings all over the map. [Here's a 'True' gifted to Tim Kaine](#). It ignores that in context Kaine suggested closing the gap using the Paycheck Fairness Act. Is that going to work if the bulk of the gap has nothing to do with gender discrimination? *Of course not*. I'm sure Kaine is grateful PolitiFact covers for him while he doesn't explain.

PolitiFact Wisconsin could have chosen [the Obama precedent](#) instead, where the president invoked the raw wage gap while calling for equal pay for equal work. Obama received a "Mostly True." That one contains a thin rationalization of Obama's mention of "equal pay for equal work" that totally ignores that he called the raw gap "wrong" and "an embarrassment" right before calling for equal pay for equal work. Even with that Mulligan, Obama received a worse rating than Baldwin.

Hey, why not [the Jim Barksdale precedent](#) (bold emphasis added by me)?

Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Jim Barksdale that women in Georgia only earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

Technically, that is true for full-time workers as a very broad measure. But the statement is missing substantial context needed to fully grasp a very complex issue.

When asked for clarification, Barksdale's campaign issued a statement that veered into the equal-pay-for-equal-work argument, something the study behind the statement did not attempt to address.

Barksdale's statement is accurate but misleading.

We rate it Half True.

See what I mean?

What you've always missed is the way this Democratic Party message, repeated over and over, makes use of [the anchoring bias](#). Democrats likely have most people believing pay discrimination based on gender (and race) is far greater than it is. And you're helping with the deception.

Correction requested: Make the rating take Baldwin's mention of "equal pay for equal work" into account. And start recognizing how this style of rhetoric deceives the audience with an exaggerated picture of the *discriminatory* pay gap.

If Democrats want to argue, for example, that female daycare workers should be making the same money as white male commercial SCUBA divers then let them do so without the smokescreen. The raw wage gap should not be used as an argument for equal work for equal pay. That's deceptive, even when the argument is implicit rather than explicit. PolitiFact Georgia's rationale for the Barksdale rating is the strongest of the three examples.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

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Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
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