

GENDER EQUALITY

# Can Swift, ‘Barbie’ magic close pay gap?

In a summer celebrating women, entertainment-wise at least, the pay gap by gender still simmers.

While we flocked to theaters to see “Barbie,” packed stadiums for Taylor Swift’s music tour and stayed up all hours cheering the U.S. women’s national team, this bright cultural spotlight doesn’t truly reflect progress at the workplace.



Jonathan Lansner  
Columnist

Despite a milestone win for equal pay last year for the U.S. women’s soccer team, my trusty spreadsheet tells me the typical female worker clearly gets paid less than her male counterpart.

A peek inside the government’s annual report on the women’s wage gap compared coronavirus-chilled 2021 to 2016. The good news for California’s female workforce is that the state’s job market has the sixth-smallest wage gap among the states.

Women’s median weekly wages statewide ran 88% of the men’s in 2021. Nationally, a female got paid 83 cents for every \$1 a man got.

So where’s the best place for female workers, looking at this compensation chasm? Women in Rhode Island earn 92% of men. That’s followed by Delaware at 91% and Wisconsin at 89%. Lows? Utah and Wyoming at 75%.

Over the five years tracked, however, California’s gap narrowed by only 0.2 percentage

points, ranking No. 32 and trailing the 1.3-point improvement nationally. The divide shrank in 32 states.

Leading the pack was Wisconsin, which shrank its gap by 11 points. Connecticut’s gap contracted 10.4 points and Rhode Island 7.2. The lowest contractions were found in New Mexico where its gap widened by 7 points, followed by Arizona up 5.8, and Indiana up 5.1.

### The opportunities

Let’s start with job counts because the opportunity to get a paycheck is just as critical as the pay itself.

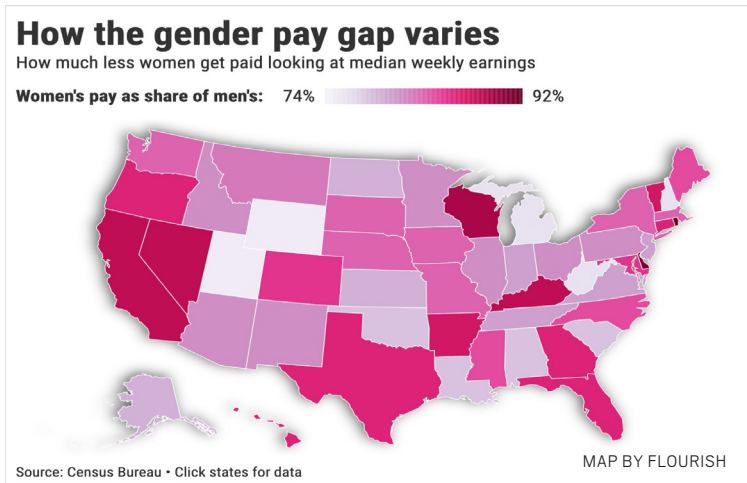
California employed the most women — 5.6 million in 2021, 11% of the nation’s 51 million. Next came Texas (4.5 million), Florida (3.5 million), New York (3 million), and Illinois (2 million).

But California’s female share of jobs was sixth-lowest at 43% vs. 45% nationally. Tops were the District of Columbia at 50%, then Mississippi at 49%, and Virginia, Delaware and Louisiana at 48%. Lows? Idaho at 41%, then Wisconsin at 42%.

Or look at women’s job growth over five years. California ranked No. 29 at 3% vs. 5% nationally. Women in 41 states enjoyed gains.

Tops were Utah at 23%, then Arizona at 18%, and Idaho at 17%. Lows? Hawaii saw female workers dip by 6%, then New York and Wisconsin, were off 5%.

The pandemic business limi-



tations varied widely across the nation in 2021. So, I also looked at the job-growth gap between women and men.

California female workers fared much better with their job growth topping men by 5.4 percentage points. That was 16th best among the states and topped the 2.9-point women’s advantage nationally. Female job growth topped males in 40 states.

Tops? Utah’s job growth for women bested men by 18 percentage points, then came Nevada at 13, and Wyoming at 11. Lows? Wisconsin, where women fared 12 points worse, then Indiana, off 7 points, and Minnesota, off 6.

### The paychecks

Now let’s talk weekly earnings.

California ranked No. 9 at \$1,020 vs. \$912 nationally. Tops? D.C. at \$1,565, then Mas-

sachusetts at \$1,157, and Maryland at \$1,134. Lows? Mississippi at \$722, then Oklahoma at \$738, and South Carolina and West Virginia at \$756.

California women’s pay rose 25% in five years, No. 8 among the states and topping 22% growth nationally.

Every state had pay raises, topped by D.C.’s 40%, then Rhode Island at 38%, and Wisconsin at 29%. Lows? West Virginia and South Carolina at 10%, and Arizona at 12%.

And ponder the wage gap another way: 2016-2021 earnings improvements by gender.

California ranked No. 32 for women’s raises vs. men’s — only 0.2 percentage points better vs. a 1.9 gap nationally. Among the states, 32 had large pay hikes for women vs. men.

Tops? Wisconsin women enjoyed pay gains 16 points better than men, then Connect-

icut at 15 points, and Rhode Island at 11. Lows? New Mexico women trailed men by 10 points, then Arizona and Indiana with 8-point disadvantages.

### Bottom line

Women are clearly closing the compensation gap.

In the entertainment world, singer Swift’s tour may sell \$1 billion worth of tickets — perhaps making it the music industry’s largest take.

“Barbie” — a film about women empowerment that’s directed by a woman, a sad Hollywood rarity — is setting some movie industry box-office records.

And in everyday life, California women seem to fare relatively well on these national yardsticks for pay and job opportunities.

To qualify that outperformance, when these nine wage-related gradings were averaged, California ranked No. 10 among the states.

The top five are Connecticut, Washington, Rhode Island, Virginia and Nevada. Bottom five: Alaska, New Mexico, Indiana, West Virginia and Minnesota.

Oh, and California’s big economic rivals? Texas was No. 9 and Florida was No. 27.

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# STATUS UPDATE



**Samantha Gowen has the latest on movers and shakers in Orange County**

Send items about business expansion, milestones and promotions to [sgowen@scng.com](mailto:sgowen@scng.com)

## Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu school Carlson Gracie now open at Triangle Square in Costa Mesa

The Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu school Carlson Gracie has opened at Triangle Square in Costa Mesa.

The school, on the first level at 1875 Newport Blvd., Suite 103A, offers classes for participants of all ages and skill levels, according to the owner, Anthony Misitano of Huntington Beach.

Misitano, who also owns a dog treat truck called The Mobile Barkery, has been practicing jiu-jitsu for eight years. He’s opening the school with business partner Diego Segura, a black belt.

The Costa Mesa studio offers classes Monday through Saturday in the Carlson Gracie method of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, as well as Nogi, Gi, and self-defense for both adults and children with no age limit and no experience required. Future classes will add Muai Thai, boxing, judo, wrestling, women’s-only classes, and an eight-week beginner course.

For more information, go to [carlsongraciecostamesa.com](http://carlsongraciecostamesa.com).

## First Chick-fil-A opens in Huntington Beach

Chick-fil-A has opened its first Huntington Beach location at Goldenwest and Warner.

The fried-chicken eatery opened Aug. 10 at 16961 Goldenwest St.

The franchise owner/operator is Blake Wohlge-muth.

## Green Feast event returns to SJC farm

The Green Feast dinner and fundraiser returns to The Ecology Center in San Juan Capistrano on Saturday, Sept. 16.

The farm-to-table event runs from 5-10 p.m. and costs \$400 per person.

“Green Feast helps to advance our mission of fostering a closer connection between people and the food system while celebrating an abundant and ecological food future,” said Evan Marks, founder of The Ecology Center.

The multicourse, farm-



PHOTO BY ANA VENEGAS

The Green Feast dinner and fundraiser returns to The Ecology Center in San Juan Capistrano on Sept. 16.



COURTESY OF CARLSON GRACIE

The Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu school Carlson Gracie has opened at Triangle Square in Costa Mesa. The school offers classes all ages and skills.

sourced meal is hosted at one long table at the 28-acre farm. Honorees this year include Joe Baird, Jennifer and Anton Segerstrom and Vicki Marks.

To buy tickets, go to [theecologycenter.org/green-feast](http://theecologycenter.org/green-feast).

### Alzheimer’s conference is Aug. 25 in Irvine

The 34th annual Southern California Alzheimer’s Disease Research Conference takes place from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Aug. 25 at the Hilton Irvine hotel.

The event is hosted by UC Irvine’s Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders, **Alzheimer’s Orange County**

and Alzheimer’s Association Orange County Chapter.

Tickets are \$125 for general in-person admission and \$75 for virtual attendance and students (online or in-person).

Register at conference.mind.uci.edu/register. For more information, email [conference@mind.uci.edu](mailto:conference@mind.uci.edu)

### On the move

Elizabeth Morton has been appointed as chief development officer at Beyond Blindness. The nonprofit helps children with visual impairments and other disabilities. Morton has a decade of experience in individual and planned giving. She previously held development po-



Morton

new general manager of Hilton Anaheim. The hotel is next to the Anaheim Convention Center and a short walk to Disneyland.



Bocci

2015 as the hotel manager and has worked for Hilton for 38 years. Since mid-2020, Bocci was the general manager at Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort.

Erica Berrios is the new chief financial officer at Families Forward. The nonprofit helps families facing a housing crisis.



Berrios

sources.

### Milestones

Katella Senior Living Community in Los Alamitos, managed by The Goodman Group, was honored for 45 years of serving seniors and their families in Los Alamitos. The certificate was presented by state Assemblyman Tri Ta in California’s 70th District on Aug. 3.

### Top Workplaces nominations to close at the end of this week

The nomination period for the Register’s 16th annual Top Workplace program ends Friday.

Any organization with 35 or more employees in Orange County is eligible to participate and includes public, private, nonprofits and government agencies.

Workplaces are evaluated by their employees using a 24-question survey.

To nominate online, go to [ocregister.com/nominate](http://ocregister.com/nominate) or call 714-442-2768.

*Status Update is compiled from press releases by contributing writer Karen Levin and edited by Business Editor Samantha Gowen. Submit items and high-resolution photos to [sgowen@scng.com](mailto:sgowen@scng.com). Allow at least one week for publication. Items are edited for length and clarity.*