

Women's Rights Fast Facts



Scenes from the Women's March Los Angeles on January 21, 2017. Photos by Maya Myers

“Despite great strides made by the international women’s movement over many years, women and girls around the world are still married as children or trafficked into forced labor and sex slavery. They are refused access to education and political participation, and some are trapped in conflicts where rape is perpetuated as weapons of war. Around the world, deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are needlessly high, and women are prevented from making deeply personal choices in their private lives.”

[Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Program](#)

Violence Against Women Fast Facts from [Human Rights Watch](#):

- An estimated 32% of women in the United States have suffered physical violence from an intimate partner and approximately 19% have been raped.
- According to the Violence Policy Center, more than 1,600 women were murdered by men in 2014 and the most common weapon used was a gun.
- Sexual violence against women in the US military is widespread, and many victims have faced retaliation for reporting abuse.
- According to a U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, in 2014 only 34 percent of rapes or sexual assaults were reported to police. In that survey, the reasons women gave for not reporting included fear of retaliation, belief the police wouldn't help, and believing it was a “personal” matter.

Women's Reproductive Health Fast Facts:

- The United States is one of only a few countries, rich or poor, that has experienced a recent increase in women dying in childbirth. ([Human Rights Watch](#))
- National Abortion Federation figures show there have been 11 murders, 26 attempted murders, 42 bombings, 185 arson attacks and thousands of other criminal acts against abortion providers since 1977. ([Human Rights Watch](#))
- 17 states use their own funds to extend abortion coverage to low-income women enrolled in Medicaid. ([Planned Parenthood](#))
- South Dakota's Medicaid program does not pay for abortion even when a woman has been raped or is the victim of incest – a clear violation of federal law, which includes these exceptions. ([Planned Parenthood](#))

Women in the Workforce Fast Facts:

- A 2014 International Labor Organization report found that out of 185 countries, only the United

States and Papua New Guinea lacked paid leave under law for new mothers, and more than 70 guaranteed paid paternity leave. ([Human Rights Watch](#))

- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission receives thousands of pregnancy discrimination and sexual harassment charges every year. ([Human Rights Watch](#))
- In 2015, women working full time in the United States typically were paid just 80 percent of what men were paid, a gap of 20 percent... ([American Association of University Women](#))

Human Trafficking Fast Facts:

- Los Angeles is a top point of entry into this country for victims of slavery and trafficking. The diverse communities of this sprawling city make it easier to hide and move victims from place to place, making it very difficult for law enforcement to locate potential survivors. ([Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking](#))
- Girls account for about 70% of human trafficking victims globally. ([Human Rights Watch](#))

Recent HRW News and Reports:

[Paid Family Leave Matters – For All Workers](#) – February 7, 2017: Parents across the US said that a lack of paid leave after childbirth or adoption contributed to delaying immunizations and health visits for babies, postpartum depression, and other health problems. Many who had no choice but to take unpaid leave went into debt, and some had to resort to welfare or bankruptcy. The 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) offers only unpaid leave, and doesn't cover all workers. Just four US states have paid family leave programs under law—California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York. Lawmakers in other states are considering paid leave bills.

[Trump's Gag Rule Puts Women's Health and Lives at Risk Globally](#) – January 23, 2017: Two days after some 5 million people around the globe marched demanding respect for women's rights, President Donald Trump reinstated the "Global Gag Rule," a destructive policy that threatens women's lives around the world.

[Ending Child Marriage Everywhere – Including in the West](#) – December 7, 2016: Did you know that a 14-year-old child can legally marry in New York State? Ending child marriage is urgent, because it is deeply harmful to children, wherever they live. Married children often drop out of school, and are locked in poverty as a result. Married girls often become pregnant soon, and early pregnancy involves serious health risks for pregnant girls and their babies. Girls who marry earlier are at higher risk of domestic violence than women who marry as adults. Married girls often face extra barriers in escaping an abusive or unhappy marriage, and accessing shelter and legal assistance.

["Booted:" Lack of Recourse for Wrongfully Discharged US Military Rape Survivors](#) – May 19, 2016: Over the past several years, in response to public pressure, the US military has made a concerted effort to improve how it handles sexual assault cases. Many of the reforms have provided important additional resources and protections for service members who are sexually assaulted while in service. Other policy changes have made it more difficult to quickly dismiss service members for mental health conditions. However, virtually nothing has been done to address the ongoing harm done to thousands of veterans who reported sexual assault before reforms took place and lost their military careers as a result of improper administrative discharges.