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# POLICY MATTERS OHIO

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2912 EUCLID AVENUE • CLEVELAND, OHIO, 44115 • TEL: 216/931-9922 • FAX: 216/931-9924  
WWW.POLICYMATTERSOHIO.ORG

## **Institute for Women's Policy Research Status of Women in the States, 2002-2003 State of Ohio Report Card**

The IWPR *Status of Women in the States* report card grades Ohio on women's political participation, employment and earnings, economic autonomy, reproductive rights, and health and well-being. The report card compares Ohio to other states, to Ohio's previous performance, and to a set of high performance goals. Ohio received poor or mediocre grades, and the state's grades declined in three of the five categories. For comparisons to other states and the nation as a whole, see the full report at [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org) or find a link at [www.policymattersohio.org](http://www.policymattersohio.org).

### **Political Participation**

**D-**

Nationally, women now register and vote slightly more than men but are vastly underrepresented among elected officials at all levels. On women's political participation, Ohio ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, earning a "D-", down from a "D" on the previous report card. Only 66.3 percent of Ohio women registered to vote in 1998 and 2000, and only 52.5 percent actually voted in these years. Between 1996 and 2000, the number of female elected officials nationwide increased to previously unprecedented levels. In Ohio, by contrast, the number of elected officials declined by more than 20 percent during this period.

### **Employment and Earnings**

**C-**

In the US, women's wages historically lag behind men's. According to IWPR, the median annual earnings for an Ohio woman working full-time, year-round in 1999 were \$26,717. This ranks Ohio at 32 and earns Ohio a "C-" for women's employment and earnings, down from a "C" on the last report card. Just 31.1 percent of women working in Ohio have professional or managerial occupations. In 2001, US women earned 73.5 percent of what men earn, while Ohio women earned only 70.7 percent of men's wages.

### **Economic Autonomy**

**C**

Ohio ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the country for women's economic autonomy, with 87.5 percent of women in the state having health insurance coverage in 2000 and 14.4 percent of women having four or more years of college in 1990. Ohio's grade rose from a "C-" on the last report card to a "C". More women in Ohio (91.3%) lived above the poverty line than nationally (88.0%) in 1999. Low wage jobs that do not provide health benefits, pensions, or family leave make economic autonomy difficult for many Ohio women.

### **Reproductive Rights**

**F**

IWPR gave Ohio an "F" on reproductive rights on both the last report card and this report card. Grading for this variable included a number of variables<sup>1</sup>, only some of which relate to Policy Matters' core mission of economic opportunity for women and men. For details, see the full report at [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Variables include legal access to abortion, laws requiring contraceptive and infertility coverage by insurers, policies allowing gays and lesbians to adopt their partners children, and sex education.

## Health and Well-Being

**C-**

Ohio ranked 34<sup>th</sup> among the states for women's health and well-being, dropping to a "C-", from a "C" on the last report card. Ohio women show above average rates of heart disease, lung and breast cancer mortality; and above average incidences of diabetes and chlamydia. The Buckeye State's health record is stronger on two fronts: Ohio ranks 17<sup>th</sup> of 51 for incidences of AIDS among women and 8<sup>th</sup> of 51 for suicide mortalities.

*The Status of Women in the States* makes several suggestions for bettering women's status in the US. IWPR recommends stronger enforcement of equal opportunity laws; improved educational opportunities; higher minimum wages; greater provision of affordable child care; mandatory paid parental leaves; and provision of a basic safety net for very low wage workers. Implementing such policies here would help Ohio make the grade as a place where women can prosper.

Institute for Women's Policy Research Report Card State of Ohio				
Indicators	National Rank	Regional Rank	Previous Grade	Grade
<b>Political Participation</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>
Women's Voter Registration, 1998-2000	30	5		
Women's Voter Turnout, 1998-2000	23	3		
Women in Elected Office, 2002	36	5		
Women's Institutional Resources, 2002	44	5		
<b>Employment and Earnings</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>
Women's Median Annual Earnings, 1999	19	3		
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings, 1999	48	5		
Women's Labor Force Participation, 2000	32	4		
Women in Managerial/Professional Occupations, 1999	26	2		
<b>Economic Autonomy</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>C</b>
Percent of Health Insurance for Nonelderly Women, 2000	17	3		
Percent of Women w/ 4 or More Years of College, 1990	43	4		
Women's Business Ownership, 1992	16	3		
Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 1997	8	2		
<b>Reproductive Rights</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Health and Well-Being</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>
*Regional rankings refer to the states in the East North Central Region (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI) Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.				