



Message from the Director

Today is the day after the Super Bowl. Even I watched the game, and it was thrilling! Exciting...and very, very manly.

What about women’s sports?

Title IX passed in 1972, granting girls and women in schools and colleges an equal opportunity to participate in sports. It’s made a huge difference. Today, 40 percent of high school girls are athletes; before Title IX, that figure was 3.7 percent.

But what about media coverage of women’s sports?

OESW’s extraordinary intern, Jaimee Leibfried, a senior at St. Kate’s, combed through the Sports section of the Minneapolis Star Tribune every day during November, and counted the number of articles on men’s sports and the number on women’s sports. Her findings are striking.

To help put the findings in context, we sought comments from a female sports reporter at the Star Tribune, from the Director of the U of M’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sports, and from a female student athlete interning at the U of M Center for Women.

The second part of this newsletter is an overview of bills that have been introduced so far in Minnesota’s 2017 legislative session. If you want further information on any of these bills, please feel welcome to email me. I will post updates on legislative activity on OESW’s [Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter](#).



We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn. Visit OESW’s [Facebook Page](#), [Twitter](#), and website www.oesw.leg.mn.

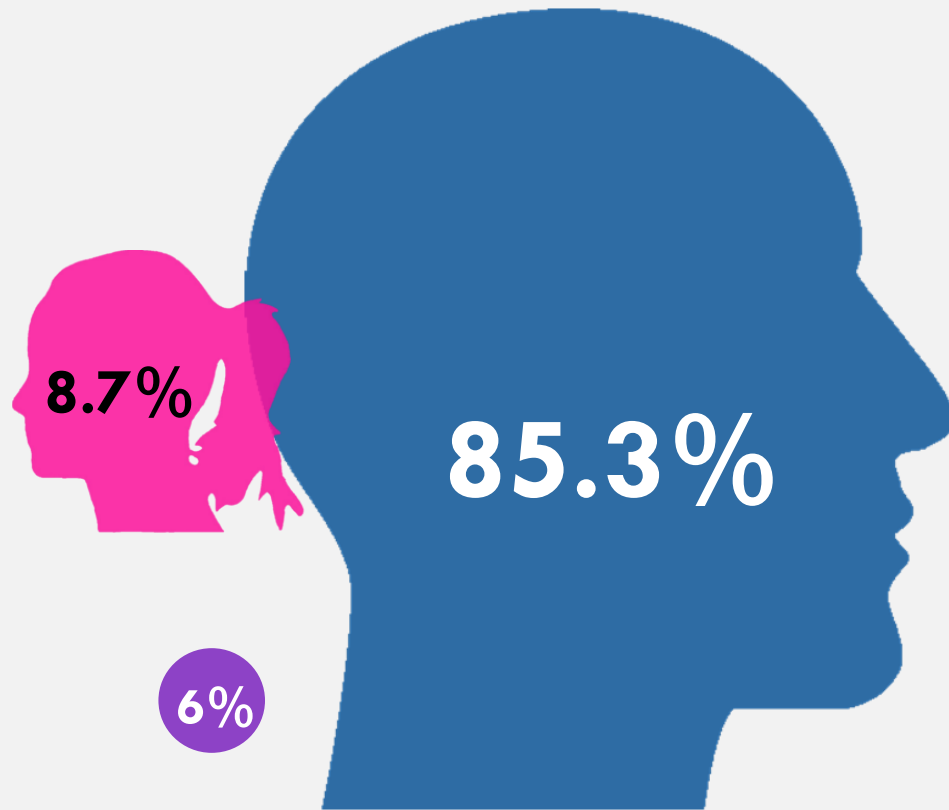
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**Minneapolis Star Tribune's Sports Section
Percentage of Men's Articles Compared to
Women's
November 2016**



Data

Women's Articles: 129
Both Gender Articles: 132

Men's Articles: 1,878
Total Articles: 2,202

About This Data

Counts are daily and do not include score reports, summaries, standings or game schedules, but do include multiple stories under one headline, "notes", "jottings," and unrelated "etc." pieces.

Women were featured on the front page 4 out of 30 days in the month of November, equating to 13% of November front page coverage.



Interpreting the Data

"It's disappointing but not surprising to see coverage of women's sports continue to lag so far behind that of men's sports. The Star Tribune and other local media are doing better in some areas, though there still is a long way to go. The Lynx are now covered far better than they were in the past; their championships have made them impossible to ignore, and their vocal fan base lets media know that coverage is important to them. Gophers women's volleyball also gets good coverage during the postseason. Women Olympians were well served by our Rio Summer Games coverage.

That said, we still don't treat women's sports anywhere close to equally. We don't travel to regular-season Lynx road games, though we travel to all Timberwolves games. We don't cover all home games for Gophers women's basketball, though the men's team has a full-time beat reporter assigned. The answer given by the decision makers is that there isn't as much interest in women's sports, as gauged by metrics such as TV ratings, attendance and clicks generated by online stories. I believe that this is partially because of the chicken-and-egg effect; perhaps there would be more interest if there were more media coverage. A lack of coverage sends the message that something isn't important, and we all know how powerful media buzz can be as a promotional tool.

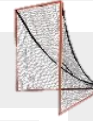
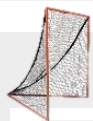
"The key is getting more women in decision making roles."

- Rachel Blount

The key is getting more women in decision making roles. In 2014, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES) gave the Association Press Sports Editors its fourth consecutive "F" grade for gender hiring practices. TIDES data shows that men account for 90.1 percent of sports editors, 90.2 percent of assistant sports editors, 87.6 percent of sports columnists and 87.4 percent of sports reporters. Those are the people setting the agenda for coverage. While there are some male editors and columnists who believe it is important to cover women's sports, the vast majority view women's sports as far less worthy than men's sports. If coverage of women's sports is to increase, we need more women in these roles.

I tell people who want more coverage of women's sports to contact editors and reporters. They need evidence that people are interested and that there is a demand for these stories. Make your voices heard!"

- Rachel Blount, Star Tribune Sports Reporter



"Over the last 40 years, sports media scholars have produced a consistent body of evidence, which is quite unusual. The research studies show two very significant patterns: The first pattern has to do with amount of coverage. Even though females represent 40% of all sports participants nationwide, they only receive about 2-4% of all sports media coverage on average. The second pattern of portrayal has to do with the type of coverage within that 2-4% of media coverage. Female athletes, when compared to their male counterparts, are much more likely to be portrayed off the court, out of uniform and in highly sexualized poses. It has not mattered whether we look at high school and college or pro and Olympic sports."

- Mary Jo Kane, Director of U of M's Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sports

Interpreting the Data cont.

"The statistics regarding coverage of men's sports vs. women's sports are upsetting but unfortunately not surprising. Conversations about sports almost always center around men's teams. Women's sports are rarely discussed, and when they are, they're treated as a lesser version of men's sports or even as a joke. Women who play sports have to fight for recognition - whether that comes in the form of media coverage, attendance, salaries, or simply being viewed as skilled athletes worthy of attention. Exceptions exist, but it is clear that invisibility and devaluation are the norm for women athletes."

Disparities in media coverage between men and women athletes are a direct reflection of gender inequity in larger society. The majority of sports editors and journalists are men. Sports fans prefer men's sports by a wide margin, as evidenced by ticket sales and TV viewership. Opportunities and incentives for competitive women athletes to continue their careers professionally are scant. The National Women's Hockey League (NWHL) recently cut their already paltry \$15,000 salaries in half due to financial constraints. For reference, the federal poverty threshold for a one-person household is approximately \$12,000. The average National Hockey League (NHL) player makes over \$2 million per year.

As an advocate for gender equity and female athletes, the gender disparities in sports coverage leaves me feeling frustrated, exhausted, and devalued. Women have made considerable progress in the arena of athletics but it is obvious that major barriers remain, ones that cannot be dismantled without addressing gender inequity as a whole."

- Stephanie Richardson, MSW Graduate Intern at the U of M's Center for Women and life-long hockey player



Go Figure

37.1%

of all journalists
are women¹

40%

of high school girls are
athletes. Before Title
IX, 3.7% of high school
girls were athletes²

\$109,500

was the 2015 WNBA
salary cap. The NBA
was capped at
\$16.407 million³

Title IX

**“No person
in the United States
shall, on the basis of sex,
be excluded from
participation in, be denied
the benefits of, or be subjected
to discrimination under
any education
program or activity
receiving Federal financial assistance”**

*- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act
of 1972*

Application to Athletics⁴:

- 1. Participation:** Athletes must be provided equitable opportunities to participate in sports. Title IX does not require institutions to offer identical sports but an equal opportunity to play.
- 2. Scholarships:** Scholarships student-athletes receive must proportional to their participation.
- 3. Other benefits:** Equal treatment of all student-athletes is required in the provisions of: equipment and supplies; scheduling; travel and daily allowance; tutoring; coaching, locker rooms, and facilities; medical and training provisions; housing and dining services; publicity and promotions; and support services and student-athlete recruitment.

Effect on Athletics⁵:

1. Female participation in sports increased in the last 40 years, with **ten times** as many high school female athletes and **six times** as many collegiate female athletes. This demonstrates that females are interested in sports and deserve equal participation.
2. Participation in sports leads to many benefits for both genders, including **lowered** levels of **risky behavior**, **higher** rates of **academic success** and a **boost in health**.
3. There is still work to do! Male's sports still receive more money, athletic opportunities are not equal across the races, and the number of female coaches is dropping.

Advancing the Ball

Achieving Gender Equity within Sports

Sports Producers, Commentators and Anchors⁶

1. Dedicate proportionate coverage to men's and women's sports based on the total number of sports played by each gender.
2. Present sports stories with the same quality of reporting, regardless of gender. This includes technical quality and verbal presentation.
3. Open sports anchor positions up to applicants who are will follow through on proportionate and equal quality coverage. It is hard to fake excitement. Therefore applicants should show equal passion for both male and female sports.

Parents⁷

1. Start sports equity conversations at your child's school. Talk with other parents, gather facts and meet with the Athletic Director to get a good idea of where your child's school is in terms of equity.
2. If the school is unresponsive to meeting equity needs, further action may need to be taken. Advocate with the school board and contact legislators if necessary.

Citizens

1. Let the media know that you are interested in women's sports⁸.
2. Submit articles to your newspaper about the disparity and women's sports in general.

Footnotes

1. American Society of News Editors, "Newsroom Diversity Survey- 2015 Census." Available at: <http://asne.org/content.asp?contentid=144>
2. Women's Sports Foundation, "Get your game on, girls! Celebrating the 40th anniversary of Title IX." Available at: <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/press-release-june-23-2011/>
3. McCullough, S. "Equality in the NBA and WNBA." Available at <http://www.slideshare.net/SamanthaMcCullough2/equality-in-the-nba-wnba-45491260>
4. NCAA, "Title IX Frequently Asked Questions." Available at: <http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/title-ix-frequently-asked-questions#title>
5. National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE), "Title IX and Athletics: Proven Benefits, Unfounded Objections." Available at: <https://www.ncwge.org/TitleIX40/Athletics.pdf>
6. Sage Publications: Communications & Sport 2015. "'It's Dude Time!' A Quarter Century of Excluding Women's Sports in Televised News and Highlight Shows." Available at <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2167479515588761>
7. Women's Sports Foundation, "Step By Step: A Practical Guide to Assessing and Achieving Gender Equity in School Sports." Available at: <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/athletes/for-athletes/know-your-rights/parents/step-by-step/>
8. Referring to Rachel Blount's comments on page 2.

Legislative Update

The 2017 Minnesota legislative session began on January 3, 2017, and will end on or before May 22, 2017. By Groundhog Day, 1,410 bills had been introduced—799 in the House of Representatives and 611 in the Senate.

Here is an overview of bills that have particular impact on women's economic security. "HF" stands for "House File," and "SF" for "Senate File." Each HF and SF number given is a live link that will take you to the wording of the bill, and show its authors and status. When a bill is noted like this [HF64/SF212](#), that means the bills are "companion" bills; i.e., identical bills have been introduced in the House and the Senate.

Child Care

Child care is a major legislative focus this year. Not only is child care generally not affordable, it is sometimes, especially in Greater Minnesota, not even available, particularly for infants.

A number of child care bills have been introduced, and it is expected that more will be introduced soon.

[HF64/SF212](#) would increase the dependent care tax credit. [HF219](#) gives priority to homeless families for the state Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) child care financial assistance program for low-income families. (There is not enough BSF funding to serve all eligible families, so priorities are important.)

[HF724/SF560](#) would fully fund the BSF program, so that all eligible families would receive child care subsidies and there would be no waiting list. This same bill would also allow "portability" of BSF funding, ending the current situation where a family is receiving BSF assistance in one county, but when they move to a different county that has a waiting list for BSF, they lose their child care assistance.

[HF604](#) repeals the right of family child care providers to unionize. In actuality, family child care providers have not elected a union to represent them, and without this, the current statutory authority of family child care providers to unionize expires on June 30, 2017, regardless of HF604.

An interesting bill ([SF448](#)) would re-fund the At Home Infant Care Program (AHIC). AHIC was established in 1997, but there has been no funding for it since 2007. The At Home Infant Care Program provides monthly payments for up to 12

months to a parent who stays home to care for a newborn. The amount of the assistance is 90 percent of what the Basic Sliding Fee assistance would be if the parent instead went back to work that first year and had the baby in child care.

A study in the year 2000, three years after the At Home Infant Care Program began, found a significant savings to the state. The parents choosing to stay home not only received less than the state would have paid under BSF if the parent had gone back to work, but the parents who stayed home were also taking care of their other pre-school children, and taking them off the BSF program. Average time that the AHIC parents took off was five months.

Racial and Ethnic Equity

Last year saw a major legislative effort to address racial and ethnic economic disparities in our state. "Equity" remains a strong concern of legislators this year.

[HF 577](#) provides grants for pilot projects in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota to encourage and support girls of color, low-income girls, and girls with disabilities in exploring and pursuing STEM education and careers.

[HF142](#) requires a Disparity Impact Analysis of all proposed legislation and of the Governor's budget proposal. State agencies would also be required to report regularly on actions they have taken to address disparities.

[HF144](#) provides support services for students that are first-generation college students, low-income, or disabled. [HF280](#) requires a better way to measure performance of schools with a large percentage of students who have difficulty in the traditional education system, like homeless or pregnant students, students who have children, who are victims of sex abuse, or who are ESL students. [HF341](#) would prevent over-enrollment of minority students and English learners in special education or disproportionate dismissal of minority students.

[HF620](#) provides funding to foster economic development in minority and new immigrant communities in St. Paul's East Side. [HF751](#) provides funding to increase the African American cultural competency of persons seeking a teaching license.

Women's Health

The second bill to pass this session is a new law ([Minnesota Session Laws 2017, Chapter 2 – signed by Governor Dayton on January 26, 2017](#)) that provides relief for Minnesotans with rising health insurance premiums. The law requires health insurers to subsidize qualifying customers' premiums. The state will reimburse insurance insurers for these subsidies. The subsidies result in a 25% discount to the approximately 120,000 Minnesotans who buy their health insurance as individuals (rather than having health insurance provided through an employer, being on Medicare, or on state health insurance programs for low-income residents, like MinnesotaCare or Medical Assistance) and who don't receive federal subsidies. Approximately \$310 million was appropriated for this legislation.

There are numerous other health care bills introduced. [HF420/SF285](#) would increase eligibility for MinnesotaCare (a state health care insurance program for low-income residents); [HF656](#) allows health insurance premiums to be tax-deductible; [HF496/SF365](#) would allow all state residents to have health insurance through the state employee's plan; and a number of bills would establish a new state health insurance plan that would guarantee affordable health insurance to all residents ([HF488/SF220](#), [SF221](#), [SF222](#), [SF223](#)).

There are also bills that would require health insurance plans to cover the cost of prescription contraceptives ([HF795/SF409](#)), bills that place additional requirements or restrictions on abortion services ([HF601](#), [SF702](#), [SF703](#), [SF704](#), [SF705](#)) and a bill ([HF411/SF281](#)) that would repeal the "informed consent" requirement for abortion.

Student Loan Debt/Education Expenses

Numerous bills would help people pay for college and manage student debt. Some allow a tax exemption or tax credits for contributions to college savings plans and for student loan payments. [HF25](#) would help students of closed, private, for-profit colleges, requiring that credits from these closed colleges be transferred to the U of M and MnSCU and extends eligibility of students of these closed colleges for state financial aid programs, child care grants, and Minnesota GI Bill benefits.

[HF21](#) creates a State Student Loan Ombudsper-

son to handle complaints from borrowers and help borrowers understand their rights & responsibilities.

[HF319/SF109](#) would provide student loan forgiveness for those who work, post-college, in Greater Minnesota.

Several bills would help residents pay for their children's K-12 education expenses. ([HF255/SF416](#), [HF386/SF256](#), [HF387](#))

Older Women

Many bills have been introduced that would exempt social security benefits from taxable income—either immediately or on a phased-out basis. [HF9/SF19](#) and [HF213/SF286](#) are two of these bills that have already been heard in House committees.

[HF225](#) increases eligibility for Medical Assistance (Minnesota's health insurance program for low-income residents) for older, blind, or disabled Minnesotans. There are bills to encourage savings for retirement and purchase of long term care insurance.

[SF637](#) funds a pilot program for health and wellness services to elderly East Africans.

Supportive Workplaces for Parents

The Working Parents Act, which was introduced last year, but didn't pass, has been re-introduced as [HF239](#). This bill provides for wage theft protection and mandates paid family leave, earned sick and safe time, and work schedules that are predictable and flexible, with advance notice of schedule changes.

Another bill, [HF315/SF454](#), takes a different approach to paid leave by giving tax credits for employers who offer paid parental leave and tax credits to employees for forgone wages when they take unpaid parental leave. ***[HF315](#) has been approved by its first committee, and will be heard next by the House Tax Committee.***

[HF600/SF580](#) would prohibit local governments from requiring private employers to pay a wage higher than the state minimum wage, from requiring paid or unpaid leave, and from setting requirements for private employers pertaining to work schedules or any other employment benefit or work condition. This prohibition would be retroactive to January 1, 2016, and thus nullify the earned sick and safe time ordinances of St. Paul and Minneapolis. [HF600/SF580](#) is referred to as

“preemption” or the “Uniform State Labor Standards Act.” **Both [HF600](#) and [SF580](#) have been approved by their first committees. [HF600](#) has a hearing before the House Government Operations Committee on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 10:15 a.m.**

Poverty

Women are more likely to live in poverty than men, especially single mothers and older women. There are a number of bills that would affect those who are poor. [HF357](#) would expand General Assistance eligibility to persons who are unemployed and looking for work and to families with children who exceed the 60-month limit on MFIP (the Minnesota Family Investment Program) eligibility. [General Assistance is a state program that provides cash assistance to individuals or childless couples who are not eligible for federally funded assistance programs, but who are unable to provide for themselves.] MFIP provides cash and food assistance to low-income families with children.

[HF28](#) would require drug and alcohol screening for certain MFIP and General Assistance applicants. Persons with two DWIs within the last five years would be ineligible for MFIP or General Assistance for three years.

[HF71](#) would count a fetus as “a human being” when determining household size for purposes of Medical Assistance.

[HF516/SF28](#) increases the state Working Family Credit—a refundable tax credit for working individuals whose income is below a certain level.

Gender Wage Gap

Under current law, after 30 working days “replacement teachers” are considered “public employees,” with the protections and benefits granted public employees, including the protection of pay equity. [HF50](#) increases that to 60 working days. Teachers, including “replacement teachers,” are disproportionately women.

[HF758](#) funds the ongoing SciTechsperience paid STEM internships for college students, offered through the Minnesota High Tech Association. One goal is to increase participation of women and other underserved populations in STEM.

Women-Owned Businesses

[HF797](#) funds a grant to WomenVenture to provide business training specifically tailored to Hispanic, African American, Hmong, and American

Indian women, delivered at locations in their communities and taught by trainers from their communities. **A hearing on [HF797](#) is scheduled in the House Jobs Committee at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 8.**

[HF89](#), with an author's amendment being offered on February 8, amends the existing Small Business Investment Tax Credit (also called the “Angel Tax Credit”) to give priority to investments in businesses in cities that do not receive local government aid payments from the state. Minnesota's Angel Tax Credit provides a 25 percent credit to investors in startup companies focused on high technology, new proprietary technology, or a new proprietary product, process or service in specified fields. Fifty percent of these tax credits are currently reserved every year until October 1 for investment in three targeted categories: businesses in Greater Minnesota, minority-owned businesses, and women-owned businesses. This bill would set the total credit amount at \$20 million beginning in tax year 2018, and reduce the amount reserved for the targeted categories to \$5 million per year. Priority for the remaining \$15 million would go to businesses that are in municipalities not certified to receive local government aid. In 2015 and 2016, targeted category businesses used less than \$5 million per year in angel tax credits. **A hearing on [HF89](#) is scheduled in the House Jobs Committee at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 8.**

[SF234](#) provides grants for statewide broadband. Lack of broadband access was cited as a priority economic concern of women in Greater Minnesota during this year's OESW listening sessions.

Equal Rights Amendment

A number of “ERA” bills have been introduced, some calling for a state constitutional ERA amendment, and some asking Congress to remove the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment by the states. ([HF189](#), [HF313/SF101](#), [HF356/SF229](#), [SF224](#))

Marriage and Divorce

[HF302](#), the “Cooperative Divorce” bill, would allow divorce by completion of an on-line form, without involvement of attorneys or the court system.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

APRIL 2017

Message from the Director

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The 2017 Minnesota legislative session will end on or before May 22, 2017. This newsletter provides an overview of proposed legislation that would have particular impact on the economic security of Minnesota's women and girls. If you want further information on any of these bills, please feel welcome to email me. I will post updates on legislative activity on OESW's [Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter](#).

We've also distilled some facts and figures on women in Greater Minnesota, thanks to the Minnesota State Demographic Center.

My great appreciation to OESW student intern, Jaimee Leibfried, a senior in Social Work at St. Kate's. She is doing a yeoman's job of helping track legislation and analyze data, and bringing me into the 21st century with graphic design.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues. Please send your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn. Visit OESW's [Facebook Page](#), [Twitter](#), and website www.oesw.leg.mn.

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

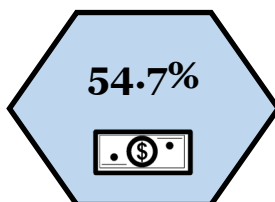
Go Figure!*



Ave. annual cost of infant care
in a MN childcare center



Ave. annual cost of care of a 4-yr.-old
in a MN childcare center



Bite out of a single parent's
paycheck for infant care



Childcare spaces lost in
Greater MN, 2006—2015



Families on waiting list for childcare
financial assistance, Oct. 2016

* All data is from the Legislative Task Force on Access to Affordable Childcare, Report and Recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature, January 15, 2017. The "bite out of a single parent's paycheck" is based on the state median income for a single parent family: \$27,093.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

a/o March 31, 2017

Almost 5,000 bills have been introduced so far by Minnesota legislators in 2017. Bills that have not yet been heard and advanced out of committees have little hope of passing this year. However, bills introduced this year remain alive in 2018.

Most bills that passed out of committees have been incorporated into a relatively small number of large “omnibus bills.” For example, the House Health and Human Services (HHS) Omnibus bill is 327 pages long and contains over 80 individual bills.

Omnibus bills are now being passed out of committees and sent to the House and Senate floor. When the version of a bill passed by the full Senate differs from its companion passed by the full House—and it is rare for them not to differ—a conference committee of a handful of senators and representatives meets to iron out the differences.

The following is a broad overview of the current status of legislative proposals that have particular impact on the economic security of Minnesota’s women and girls:

Women-Owned Businesses

The House Omnibus Jobs bill ([HF2209](#)) provides funding to WomenVenture for business training specifically tailored to Hispanic, African American, Hmong, and American Indian women, delivered in their communities and taught by trainers from their communities.

The House Omnibus Jobs bill also provides funding to WomenVenture to establish two pilot co-operative childcare businesses in low-income urban areas. A cooperative business structure can be a way for childcare workers to earn higher wages and have workplace benefits like health insurance, a 401k match, consistent and predictable hours, paid leave, and schedule flexibility. Wages for childcare co-op workers in other parts of the country are typically two to two-and-a-half times what a traditional childcare worker earns. The planned result of this pilot project is not only to establish two profitable childcare centers in low-income areas, but to develop a model that can be replicated throughout the state.

The House Omnibus Jobs bill ([HF 2209](#)) eliminates individual funding for seven of the 2016 Equity Grant Programs—including the Emerging Entrepreneur program, which has as priorities businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, low-income people, and people with disabilities. Instead it is proposed that these seven programs compete against each other for a reduced overall funding.

Neither the House nor Senate omnibus tax bill ([HF4/SF2255](#)) provides continued funding for the “angel tax credit” program, meaning it could sunset the end of 2017. This program gives income tax credits to investors who put money into qualifying business start-ups, with priority for women-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and businesses in Greater Minnesota.

Racial and Ethnic Equity

A number of provisions in the House and Senate Omnibus Jobs bills ([HF2209/SF1937](#)) provide continued funding, though often at reduced levels from the last biennium, to various nonprofits that help low-income people and people from ethnic or racial minority communities succeed academically and economically. The House bill eliminates individual funding for seven of the 2016 Equity Grant Programs—including the Emerging Entrepreneur program, which has as priorities businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, low-income people, and people with disabilities, and the Women in High-Wage, High-Demand, Nontraditional Jobs program, which was part of the 2014 Women’s Economic Security Act and was amended last year to give priority to women of color. The House bill instead has these seven programs compete against each other for a reduced overall funding.

The Senate Omnibus Jobs bill ([SF1937](#)) creates a new “Nonprofit Assistance Fund,” which would give capacity-building grants to culturally specific nonprofits that serve historically underserved cultural communities.

Equal Rights Amendment

Equal Rights Amendment bills have not received hearings this year in either House or Senate.

Childcare

Last legislative session a House “select committee” on childcare studied causes and possible improvements to make childcare in Minnesota affordable and available. Last summer a joint House/Senate legislative task force worked on the issue. This legislative session a House subcommittee on childcare heard countless hours of testimony and developed a large number of bills to address the problem. All this good work had the potential of being a game-changer for Minnesotans with young children and for childcare providers.

Unfortunately, not many of the recommendations of these bodies have been included in the omnibus bills that are advancing. Neither the House nor the Senate Omnibus Health and Human Services (HHS) bill ([HF945/SF800](#)) increases the childcare assistance reimbursement rate to childcare providers who serve low-income families. (The current reimbursement rate is the 25th percentile of market rates for 2011. This means that 75% of providers in 2011 were charging more that year than the current state reimbursement rate.)

There is no provision that ends the current situation where a move from one county to another may bump a family to the bottom of the waiting list for childcare assistance. There is no reduction of the waiting list of families for Basic Sliding Fee childcare assistance, a waiting list that hovers in the 5,000 – 6,000 families range.

The childcare proposals that did make it into the omnibus bills do solve some of the enforcement and regulatory complaints of family childcare providers that were driving them out of the business.

The House Omnibus HHS bill ([HF945](#)) repeals the 2013 law that allowed family childcare providers to unionize.

The Senate Omnibus HHS bill ([SF800](#)) funds the At-Home Infant Care program (AHIC). AHIC allows a low-income parent of a newborn to elect to stay home to take care of the baby in its first year. Instead of receiving childcare assistance from the state, the family receives a portion of the Basic Sliding Fee childcare assistance subsidy. Essentially, AHIC subsidizes a parent who elects to stay home to take care of a new baby in its first year rather than giving a larger subsidy to a parent who goes back to work during a baby's first year.

AHIC was created by the legislature in 1997, but it has not been funded since 2007.

The House Omnibus Jobs bill ([HF2209](#)) continues to fund the grant program created by the legislature last year providing funds to local communities (especially in Greater Minnesota) to increase the number of childcare providers.

Both House and Senate Omnibus Higher Education bills (the House bill, [HF2477](#), is here [March 31 House Journal pp 3646-3696](#); the Senate bill is here [SF2214](#)) expand the childcare assistance for college students who have children. The expansion increases the length of time student parents can be in college and still be eligible (from eight to ten semesters) and the amount of the assistance (from \$2,800 to \$3,000 per academic year).

Women's Health

The House Omnibus Health and Human Services Bill ([HF945](#)) eliminates MNsure. (MNsure is the state online health insurance marketplace where individuals, families and small businesses can compare and choose health insurance coverage, and apply for financial help to lower health insurance costs.) Minnesota would instead opt into the federal health insurance marketplace.

Bills that place additional requirements or restrictions on abortion services have advanced through committee and are awaiting action by the full House or Senate ([HF809/SF702](#))

Student Loan Debt

There are many bills or provisions of omnibus bills that seek to help people with student debt. Both House and Senate Omnibus Tax bills ([HF4/SF2255](#)) allow tax credits to offset student loan payments. Some “forgive” a portion of student debt, based on either what your degree is in (e.g., there are provisions to forgive part of student loans if you graduate with an aviation degree or large animal veterinarian degree). One particularly promising bill would forgive \$3,000 of your student loan per year for five years for every year after graduation that you work in Greater Minnesota. This “Greater Minnesota” provision is included in the House Omnibus Higher Education bill (SF2214—see [March 31 House Journal pp 3646-3696](#)) but the appropriation is only \$300,000 for the biennium—the original Greater Minnesota student loan forgiveness bill had funding of \$20,000,000 for the biennium. \$300,000 would serve about 50 people per year, but it is doubtful that is enough to provide an incentive for people to work in Greater Minnesota.

Older Women

Both House and Senate Omnibus Tax bills ([HF4/SF2255](#)) increase the amount of social security benefits that are tax exempt. The House bill, which increases the threshold income below which all social security benefits are tax exempt, would result in more lower-income seniors having all their social security benefits be tax-exempt, but would have a resultant revenue loss to the state of \$269M in the 2018-2019 biennium and a loss of \$412M in the 2020-2021 biennium. The Senate proposal is more complex, and would also increase the number of lower-income seniors who would have all social security benefits tax-exempt, with a resultant revenue loss to the state of \$75M in the 2018-2019 biennium and a loss of \$82M in the 2020-2021 biennium.

(Minnesota is one of 13 states that taxes, for some income levels, part of social security benefits. Minnesota follows the federal tax laws pertaining to social security, exempting all social security benefits from taxation for low-income seniors, taxing up to 50 percent of social security for higher-income seniors, and taxing up to a maximum of 85 percent of social security for high-income seniors.)

Poverty

The House Omnibus Health and Human Services bill ([HF945](#)) removes a financial disincentive for people on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) who want to get married.

The House Omnibus Health and Human Services bill ([HF945](#)) provides no increase in the amount of cash assistance to MFIP families. The Senate Omnibus HHS bill ([SF800](#)) increases the MFIP cash assistance by \$13/month. (MFIP is for very low-income families and pregnant women. The current monthly MFIP cash assistance for a single mother with one child is \$437; for a family of three it is \$532. This amount has not increased since 1986.)

The House Omnibus Jobs bill ([HF2209](#)) provides \$400,000 for the 2018-19 biennium for the displaced homemaker program. \$4,000,000 had been requested. Minnesota's Displaced Homemaker Program helps individuals who need to enter or re-enter the workforce due to abandonment, divorce, death, disability or military deployment of a spouse. There are six displaced homemaker service providers in the state. Each provider serves seven to eleven counties; each

provider has one or two staff members. Currently, no tax dollars go to Minnesota's displaced homemakers program. Funding comes instead from marriage license and divorce filing fees. The revenue from those fees is going down and the number of displaced homemakers requesting help is going up.

The Senate Omnibus Jobs bill ([SF1937](#)) provides \$200,000 for a new "Getting to Work" program, which would give grants to nonprofits who in turn would provide cars or car repair services for low-income people who need the cars to obtain or keep employment.

The House Omnibus Tax bill ([HF4](#)) includes a small, one-time (tax year 2017) increase in the renter's property tax refund, but a decrease for future years. This is of particular importance to older women, who often are low-income, and often are renters.

The House Omnibus Tax bill ([HF4](#)) increases the dependent care tax credit (a tax credit to offset expenses for child and dependent care for lower-income taxpayers that are working or looking for work). This is projected to provide almost \$36M in tax relief for working families in FY2018-2019.

Supportive Workplaces for Parents

In November of 2016, amendments to state labor contracts negotiated by Governor Dayton's administration providing up to six weeks of paid parental leave for state government workers became effective. The paid leave has been in place since then, but unless it is ratified by the state legislature prior to its May 22, 2017, adjournment date, the paid parental leave will end. So far, neither the House nor Senate Omnibus State Government bill contains a provision to ratify paid parental leave for state government employees.

Gender Wage Gap

Both House and Senate Omnibus Jobs bills ([HF2209/SF1937](#)) significantly reduce funding for the WESA "women in high-wage, high-demand nontraditional jobs" grant program. The Senate bill cuts the funding in half. The House bill lumps this program in with six other programs, who will compete for funding, so there is no guarantee of how much or even whether there will be funding for this program in the coming biennium.

Women in Greater Minnesota

Economics

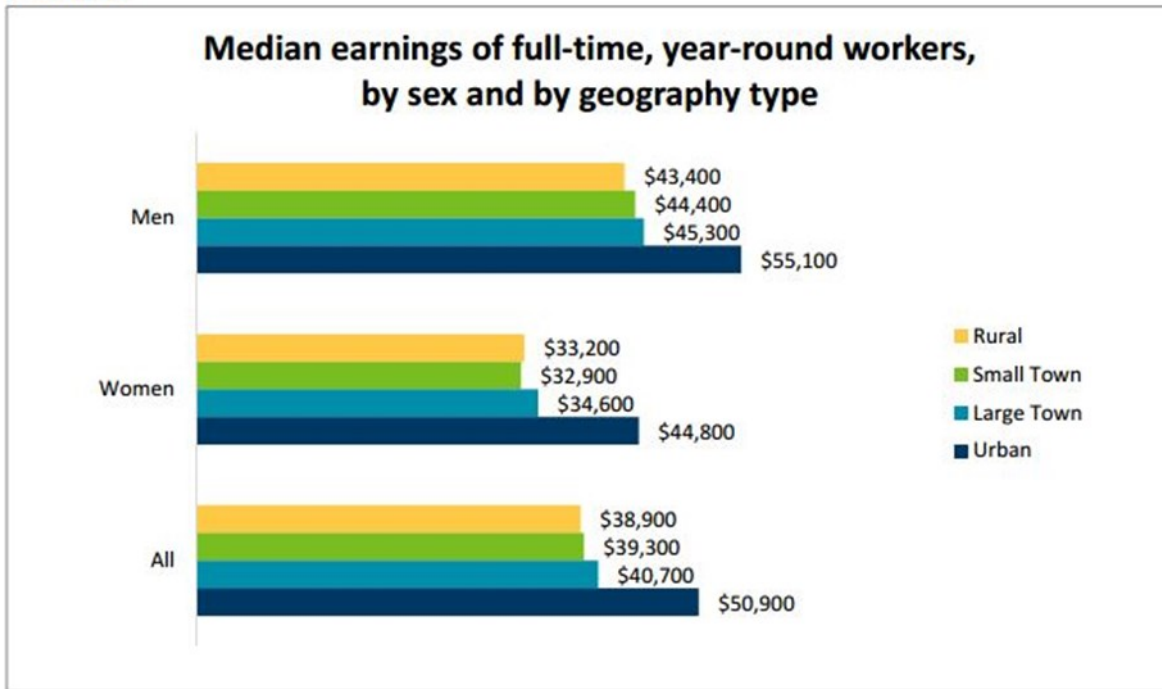
- Half or more of men working fulltime in rural, small town, or large town Minnesota earn less than \$45,300 annually. Half or more of all women working full-time in rural, small town, or large town Minnesota earn less than \$34,600 annually. Urban workers' median earnings, for men and women, are \$10,000 or slightly higher than all other geography types. This earnings advantage is due in part to more urban employment in higher paying industries.
- Male workers' median earnings are about \$10,000 or more greater than female workers' earnings, regardless of geography type.

Elders

- Within the age 80+ population, women account for 60% of the population in rural Minnesota, 62% in small town Minnesota, 64% in large town Minnesota, and 63% in urban Minnesota.

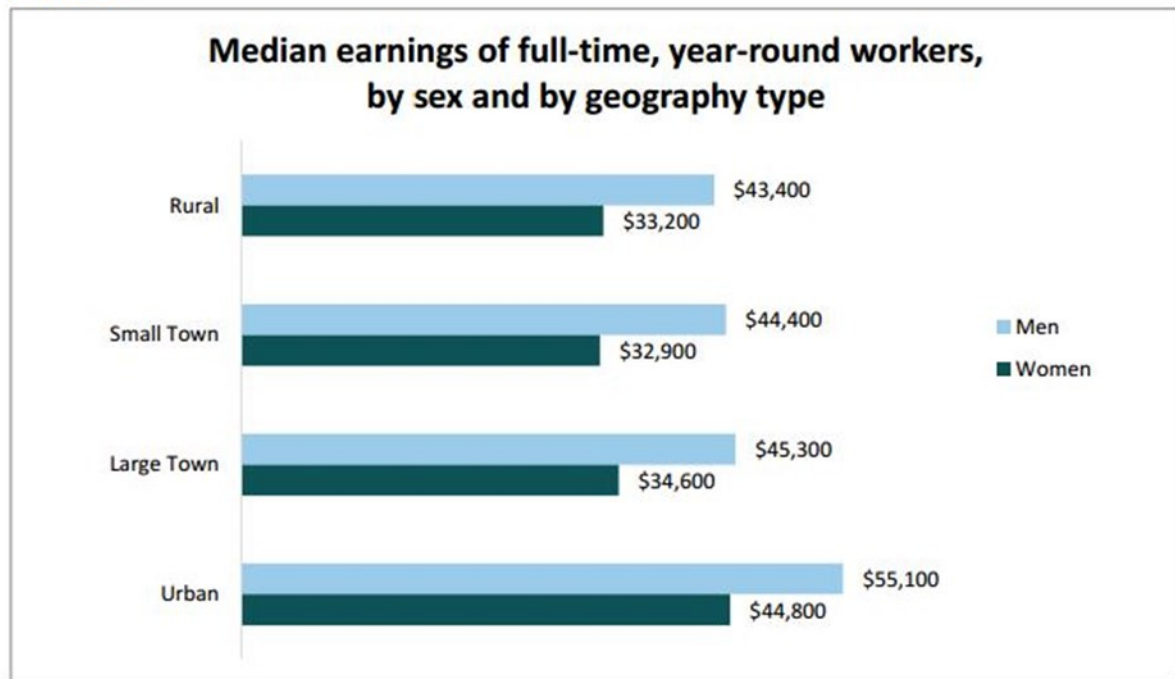
Source: [*Greater Minnesota: Refined and Revisited*](#),
Minnesota State Demographic Center. January, 2017.

FIGURE 16



Source: [*Greater Minnesota: Refined and Revisited*](#), Minnesota State Demographic Center. January, 2017.

FIGURE 17



Source: [*Greater Minnesota: Refined and Revisited*](#), Minnesota State Demographic Center. January, 2017.



Message from the Director

[OESW’s February newsletter](#) examined media coverage of women’s sports. We did this by counting the number of articles on women’s sports and on men’s sports in the Minneapolis Star Tribune sports section every day during November 2016 .

Results were dismal: 8.7% of the Star Tribune’s sports articles during November were on women’s sports; 85.3% were on men’s sports. (6% were on both genders.)

There was a lot of interest in these findings. We also received suggestions that we do a similar analysis during March Madness, when both women’s and men’s sports are on steroids...so to speak. In addition, we were told that the Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, an 80-year-old newspaper focusing on Minnesota’s African American community, does an outstanding job of covering women’s sports.

Therefore, this month’s OESW newsletter takes a second look at gender equity in coverage of sports. We counted the number of articles on women’s and on men’s sports in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the Duluth News Tribune, the Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, and—to give a national perspective—Sports Illustrated.

In the meantime, the 2017 legislative session ends on May 22nd. Things are too uncertain to have a legislative update in this newsletter, but stay tuned for a comprehensive overview of new 2017 legislation in OESW’s next newsletter.

OESW and the Minnesota Women’s Consortium are again co-sponsoring a *Session Wrap-Up: Gender Equity Style* on Tuesday, June 20, 5:30—7:30 p.m., Room 5 of the State Office Building. This is open to all. More details will be sent soon.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Its purpose is to provide information to legislators, legislative staff, and the community on priority and emerging women's economic issues.

Please send your suggestions to barbara.battiste@oesw.leg.mn. Visit OESW’s [Facebook Page](#), [Twitter](#), and website www.oesw.leg.mn.

Barbara Battiste, Director, Office on the Economic Status of Women

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SAVE THE DATE:

Session Wrap-Up: Gender Equity Style

Tuesday, June 20, 5:30—7:30 p.m., Room 5, State Office Building

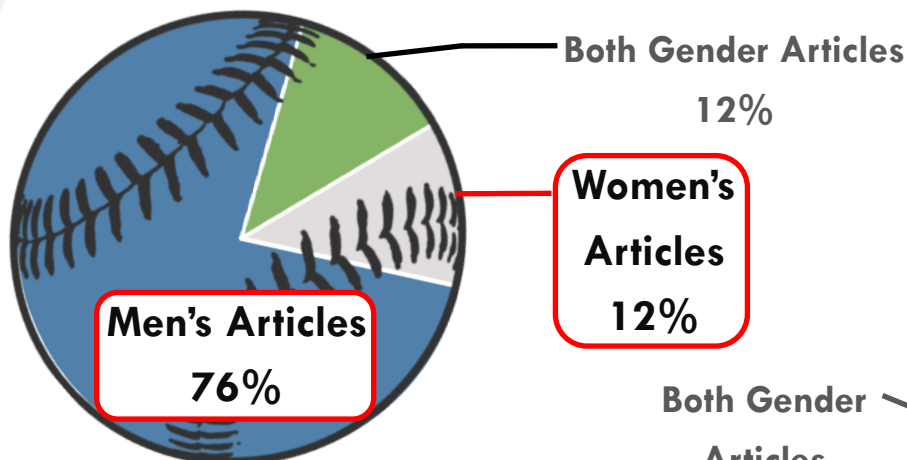
Details will be sent soon.

Women's Sports & the Media

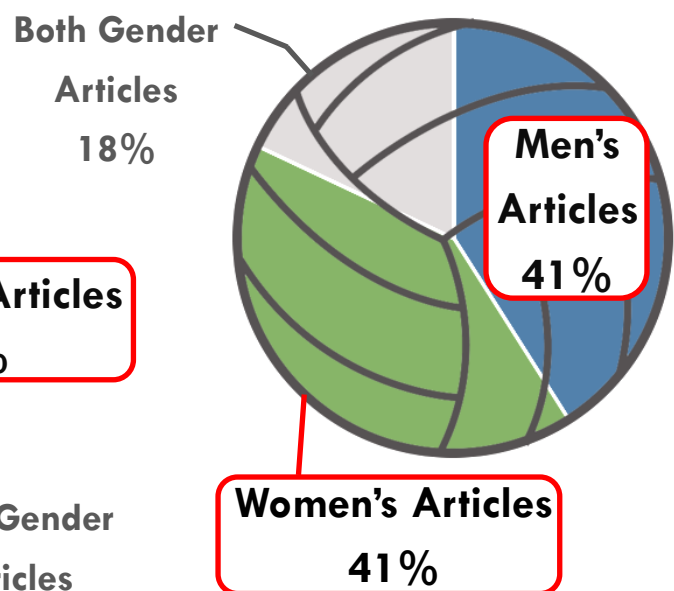
A Second Look during March Madness

Percentage of Articles on Women's Sports Compared to Men's

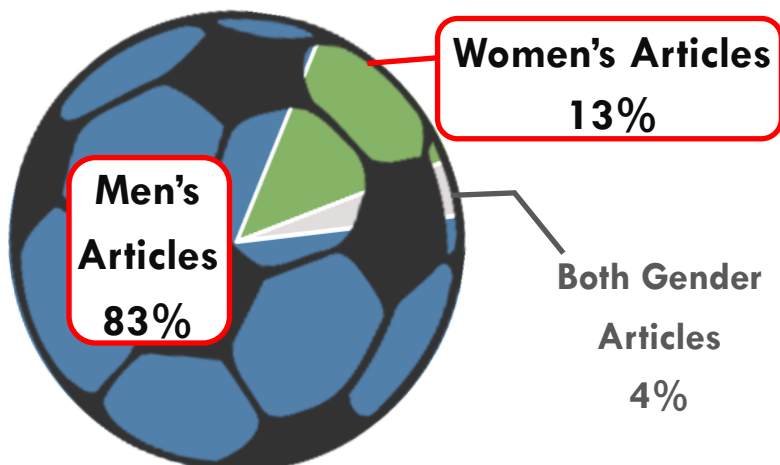
Duluth News Tribune



Minnesota Spokesman Recorder

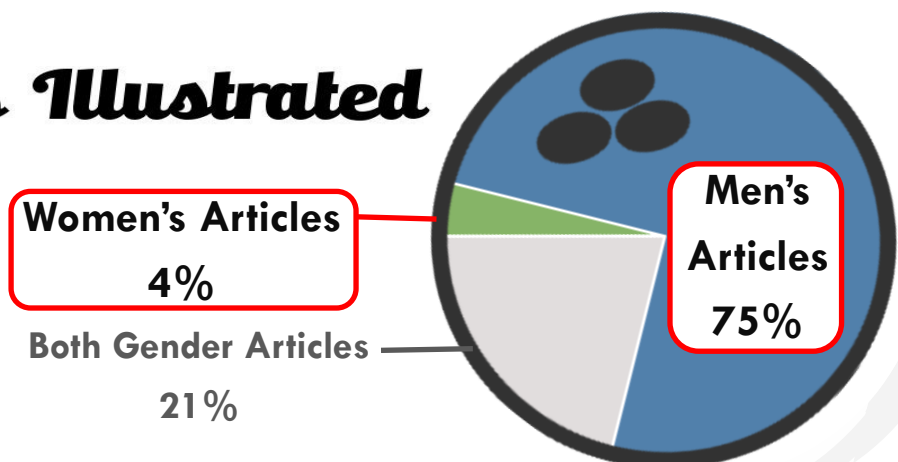


Star Tribune



Sports Illustrated

About this Data
Sports articles were counted every day throughout March and do not include score reports, summaries, standings or game schedules, but do include multiple stories under one headline, "notes", "jottings," and unrelated "etc." pieces.



Minnesota Spokesman Recorder:

The MSR is the oldest Black-owned business in Minnesota. Established in 1934 by Cecil E. Newman, the MSR remains a family-run newspaper that is African American and woman-owned, led by CEO/Publisher, Tracey Williams-Dillard, granddaughter to Mr. Newman. OESW commends the MSR on its achievement in equitable gender reporting in the sports section. In the month of March, MSR gave equal coverage to male and female sports.

Commentary to OESW by Charles Hallman, MSR Columnist and Sports Reporter:

Perhaps the most exciting Women's Final Four in recent history took place this year in Dallas. This included an "instant classic" semifinals contest, won in overtime on a made jump shot by the shortest player on the court – a shot heard around the women's basketball world by Mississippi State that snapped Connecticut's historic 111 consecutive win streak. The championship was won two days later by South Carolina, whose coach Dawn Staley was the first player to win the title game's most outstanding player award on the runners-up squad.

But sadly this barely made most newspapers and magazines' sports front pages. USA Today instead ran a full page spread on the Men's Final Four teams. Eventual men's champion North Carolina made [Sports Illustrated's cover](#) and almost ten pages were devoted to the semifinals and finals but the entire Women's Final Four were barely squeezed within three pages.

Gender inequity in sports media coverage? An oft-discussed topic over the years in academia ([Michael Messner and Cheryl Cooky](#) have done numerous studies on the subject). The [University of Minnesota's Tucker Center](#) has long advocated for better women's sports coverage. Minnesota [Gov. Mark Dayton](#) also has challenged local media to do better in this regard.

I spent over three-fourths of my four-decade-plus journalism career focusing on women's sports, beginning with college radio in Michigan in 1975, then in Illinois, and now in both broadcast and print since relocating to the Twin Cities in the early 1980s to comment on the "Second Look" follow-up at women's sports and the media. I wish I could offer something new, profound, or new revelation.

The sad truth is that 45 years after the passage of Title IX, 20 years after the successful launching of the WNBA, and over two decades since the debut of the Williams sisters (who have ruled tennis both single and doubles), gender inequity in sports coverage still exists.

Change, especially in women's sports coverage, remains turtle-like mainly because of the influential and mostly male sports editors, who all too often operate with chauvinist beliefs. Pressuring them to change is still needed, but added to that pressure are ones who write the editors' checks. Copy such pressure on advertisers as well.

But doing this doesn't take those of us who cover women's sports off the hook either. There are still too many who cover it like they are waiting for something better (namely men's sports) to come along. There are still too many who exert as little effort as possible in their coverage, lacking any imagination.

And I still strongly urge women's sports fans to be consistent squeaky wheels -- bombard sports editors, program managers, publishers, owners and advertisers with phone calls, letters, emails and social media messages. Praise them when they do provide coverage, but push them for more.

Until then, nothing will change.

Professional Women's Hockey: A Timeline

October 11, 2015

The National Women's Hockey League (NWHL) becomes the first professional women's hockey league in North America. They begin with 4 teams in the US.

October 2016

The second NWHL season officially starts. Women's hockey players earn \$1,000 a month for six months of a four-year Olympic cycle. For the rest of the 3 1/2 years, the players earn virtually nothing.¹

March 15, 2017

Ranking #1 in the world, US women's hockey players announce their decision to boycott the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) world championship after wage negotiations were stalled.

November 17, 2016

NWHL reduces players' salaries to save the season. Neither the players nor the players union were involved in this decision.

March 23, 2017

USA Hockey starts searching for replacement players for the IIHF world championship.

The boycott gains the support of the NHL, NBA, WNBA, NFL, MLB and the US women's soccer team.

March 28, 2017

An agreement is reached! After 15 months of negotiation and 13 days of boycotting, USA Hockey and the US women's team agree to forming a Women's High Performance Advisory Group to advance women's and girls' hockey at youth levels, travel and insurance provisions equal to that of men's, \$2,000 training stipends per month and larger performance bonuses for winning medals.³

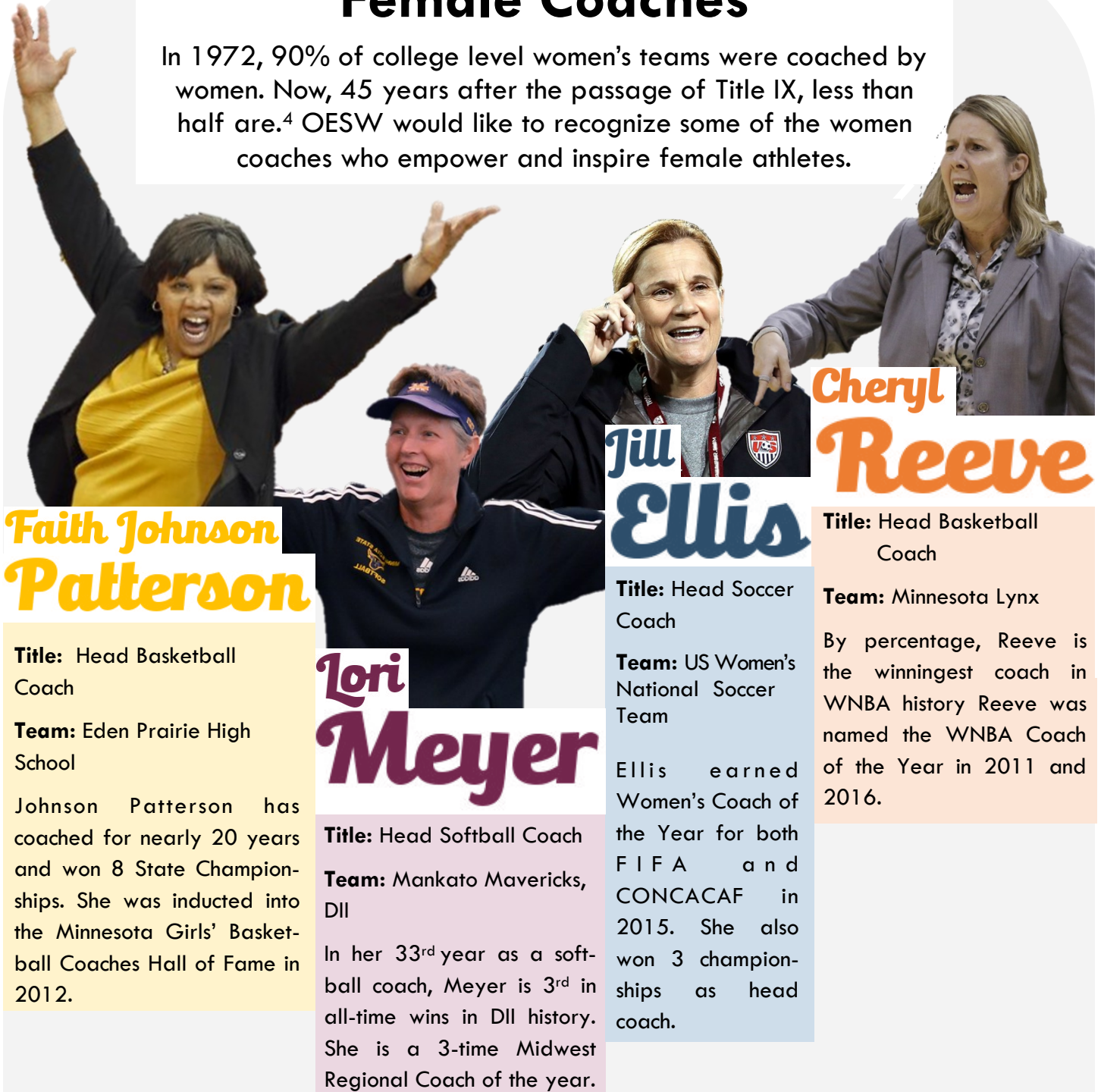
March 27, 2017

20 US senators signed a letter addressed to USA Hockey Executive Director Dave Ogreaan urging him to resolve the dispute equitably.²



Female Coaches

In 1972, 90% of college level women's teams were coached by women. Now, 45 years after the passage of Title IX, less than half are.⁴ OESW would like to recognize some of the women coaches who empower and inspire female athletes.



Faith Johnson Patterson
Title: Head Basketball Coach
Team: Eden Prairie High School
Johnson Patterson has coached for nearly 20 years and won 8 State Championships. She was inducted into the Minnesota Girls' Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 2012.

Lori Meyer
Title: Head Softball Coach
Team: Mankato Mavericks, DII
In her 33rd year as a softball coach, Meyer is 3rd in all-time wins in DII history. She is a 3-time Midwest Regional Coach of the year.

Jill Ellis
Title: Head Soccer Coach
Team: US Women's National Soccer Team
Ellis earned Women's Coach of the Year for both FIFA and CONCACAF in 2015. She also won 3 championships as head coach.

Cheryl Reeve
Title: Head Basketball Coach
Team: Minnesota Lynx
By percentage, Reeve is the winningest coach in WNBA history. Reeve was named the WNBA Coach of the Year in 2011 and 2016.

Sources

1. National Public Radio, All Things Considered. (24 March, 2017). *U.S. Women's Hockey Starters Plan To Boycott Championship*. [Available here.](#)
2. United States Senators. (27 March, 2017). [Personal letter]. [Available here.](#)
3. Berkman, S. (28 March, 2017). *U.S. Women's Team Strikes a Deal with USA Hockey*. New York Times. [Available here.](#)
4. Stark, R. (2016). *Where Are The Women?*. NCAA Champion Magazine. [Available here.](#)