

INTRODUCTION: *It is frustrating to see the direction of the country and the situation that surrounds us. We face an economy with too few job opportunities for us and our loved ones. Prices seem to be endlessly increasing, while pay barely seems to change. We lack confidence in the quality of the health care or education we can expect. We worry that the culture is fraying around us, and that matters will get worse. We see and often feel discrimination and its unfairness. And we wonder if it really could be that all conservatives, or half the country, are part of “War on Women” as some of the left claim, and are eager to take away contraception or are indifferent to wage discrimination.*

To start this conversation, **take the quiz** to see what you know about the War on Women.

1: You’ve probably heard the phrase, “The Republican War on Women.” Where do you think this term came from?

- A. Republican Congressional leaders pushed legislation to outlaw contraception, which led their opponents to call their effort a “War on Women.”
- B. A Republican Congressman slipped up and admitted that conservatives were waging a war on women’s freedoms.
- C. Democratic strategists developed the concept of casting all GOP proposals as a part of a “War on Women” as a political strategy to turn out the women’s vote.

ANSWER: C – In early 2012, Democrat operatives who met every Thursday at a meeting hosted by former Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s staff looked at the President’s terrible poll numbers and decided that in order to win they needed to increase support among women. In order to shift focus away from the Administration’s economic failures and the unpopular health care law, Democrats sought to capitalize on women’s concerns by charging that Republicans, wherever they disagreed with Democrats, were doing so because they were waging a “War on Women” on a wide range of issues. The effort continues as Democrats try to convince women, particularly unmarried women, that Republicans are sexist, out-of-touch, and interested in rolling back women’s rights. Opposition to essentially any progressive proposal—higher taxes, more government spending, more onerous regulations—is portrayed as evidence of a “War on Women.”

2: Part of the “War on Women” charge is that Republicans are seeking to limit access to contraception. Why?

- A. Republicans in Congress introduced a bill that would make it illegal for insurance companies to cover contraception.
- B. Republicans introduced a bill that would outlaw all contraception.
- C. Republicans held a hearing about women’s health and only had men on the panel.
- D. None of the above.

ANSWER: D – ObamaCare forced all employers to pay for insurance covering twenty methods of contraception, including some products that those with deeply held moral views objected to as a matter of conscience. No Republican has offered legislation to attempt to outlaw contraception or discourage health insurers from covering contraception. Republicans did object to the requirement in ObamaCare that all employers, including those with religious objections, have to provide health insurance that gives all enrollees free access to all FDA-approved contraceptive devices. They believe that employers should be free to offer health insurance coverage with and without that coverage, and that employees can choose whether to use their employer-provided health insurance, or to seek insurance elsewhere. Also, Republicans did hold a hearing on religious liberty concerns, featuring religious leaders as witnesses; Democrats at the last minute asked to add 30-year-old student and activist Sandra Fluke to the witness roster, and when that was denied (as she did not meet the criteria for witnesses under the topic of the hearing), Democrats went to the media and claimed it was a hearing on women’s health – the first salvo in the putative “War on Women.”

3: Anyone opposing proposals to increase the minimum wage and expand funding for childcare is accused of being part of a “War on Women.” What reason do opponents give for opposing a minimum wage increase and more government funding for childcare?

- A. A minimum wage increase would reduce the number of part time and entry-level jobs available. That would hurt many women, especially those with low-incomes or who are out-of-work today.
- B. A minimum wage increase isn’t a very effective way to reduce poverty, since most of those working for minimum wage are in households with other earners. So instead of helping the most destitute, it would be particularly hard on those looking for essential entry-level experience, like teenagers.
- C. Our government is already trillions of dollars in debt, and this high level of debt is hurting the economy by making everything cost more (asset inflation) – which means families struggle to keep up with growing costs. The way to stop this is just the way you would manage debt with a household budget: stop spending money we don’t have.
- D. Most parents, including low-income parents, prefer to use arrangements other than institutional daycare centers. It’s unfair for government to subsidize just this one

childcare option which benefits only some parents at high cost to others. It would be better to reduce the financial burden on all parents, regardless of what kind of childcare they use. Individual parents will spend that money in ways that are better for their families than some distant bureaucrat will.

E. All of the above.

ANSWER: E – There are many legitimate reasons why conservatives oppose Progressive proposals to grow government and increase government regulation, including that conservatives care about the reality of what actually happens to women if these policies are implemented. Animosity toward women isn't one of them.

4: You've probably heard that there is a "Wage Gap" and women are paid only \$.77 for every dollar a man earns. Does this statistic mean that:

- A. On average, when there are male and female coworkers doing the same job, the woman earns \$.77 for every \$1 a man earns
- B. For any given profession or job category, a similarly qualified woman earns \$.77 for every \$1 a man earns
- C. For any given level of education and experience, a similarly qualified woman earns \$.77 for every \$1 a man earns
- D. The average wage for all women who work full-time is \$.23 cents less than the average wage that all men working full-time make.

ANSWER: D – The "Wage Gap" statistic comes from the Department of Labor. It compares the median wages of a full-time working man with a full-time working woman, and it shows that on average women earn less than men do. This statistic does not take into account the number of hours worked, the profession, job responsibilities, years of experience or educational background of the workers. By the way, the most recent data for this statistic shows the average woman earning **82 percent** of the average man's earnings, not 77 percent. When Economist June O'Neill controlled for factors such as work experience, career choice, time out of the workforce and school, just a 3.3 percent gap remains. Even the liberal American Association of University Women found in a study of recent graduates, that when the choice of major, hours worked, and career choices were taken into account, the wage gap shrinks to 6.6 cents on the dollar.

5: Why do conservatives oppose legislation called the "Paycheck Fairness Act"?

- A. Republicans oppose equal work for equal pay and hate women.
- B. There are already laws on the books that make it illegal to discriminate against women and that require equal pay for equal work.
- C. The "Paycheck Fairness Act" makes it more difficult for employers to defend

themselves in lawsuits, which would enrich lawyers but do little to encourage more justice or better treatment of women.

- D. The “Paycheck Fairness Act” would discourage employers from offering the kinds of flexible job arrangements that women crave most.
- E. The “Paycheck Fairness Act” would mean that employers would steer more money to litigation and compliance costs. That would leave less to pay workers and for investing in their core business.
- F. All of the above except (A).

ANSWER: F – The “Paycheck Fairness Act” would benefit lawyers, not women, make jobs and flexibility more scarce, and make it more difficult for businesses to keep workers and grow. And there are already laws that outlaw discrimination and allow women to sue employers who mistreat them. These are among the many reasons conservatives oppose the “Paycheck Fairness Act.”

6: What’s the real impact of the “War on Women” charge?

- A. It exposes Republicans’ sexism and harmful agenda to women.
- B. It distracts voters from the biggest issues facing the country, such as our continuing economic problems, high rates of joblessness, and the problems with ObamaCare.
- C. It discourages a real discussion of how public policy impacts women.
- D. Both B and C

ANSWER: D – The greatest casualty in the “War on Women” is a needed discussion and focus on how to address the issues that are most important to women and our country.

The Bottom Line

Liberty is no war on women. Democrats have used the “War on Women” charge to hurt Republicans’ reputations, tar them as sexists, and to distract from the real problems facing our country, such as joblessness and the problems with ObamaCare. We should be able to have reasonable debates about the role of government in our lives. Those who support big government should understand that those of us who oppose their agenda do so for legitimate reasons, not because of sexism. Americans deserve better than this kind of name-calling.

How Did You Do?

Check your answers and give yourself one point for each question you got right.

Did you get fewer than 3 points? That's okay! This information isn't well known, and in fact, most of the discussion you hear about this topic in the media ignores this information. Take a look at our suggested readings and learn more about the misuse of the phrase "War on Women."

Did you get more than 3 points? If so, congratulations! You know your stuff and should speak up when you hear a discussion about the so-called "War on Women" since so many people haven't heard this information!

Discussion Questions

- What do you think of what you hear the term "The War on Women"?
- Do you think that Republicans are really out to keep contraception from women? If so, why didn't they push this when George W. Bush was President and Republicans controlled Congress?
- When you are called a name like sexist or racist, does it encourage you to keep talking or to be silent? Do you think that the real reason for this charge is to silence the opposition?
- Do you think that those who believe in limited government are generally hostile to women?
- What do you think is the best way that conservatives can prove that there is no conservative "War on Women"??

Articles to Read

NRO: [No War on Women](#) (Interview with IWF's Sabrina Schaeffer)

NRO: [Shriver Report Is the New "War on Women" Manifesto](#), Carrie Lukas

U.S. News [Five Myths About the Republican War on Women](#), Mary Kate Cary

Action Items

- Ask your friends and family what they think the “War on Women” means. Ask if they think it is fair to call your opponent names when you disagree with them. Ask if they think there is any legitimate reason for opposing growing government and the state. Ask them to be specific about what they think Republicans are proposing that is bad for women.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper the next time you read a reference to the “War on Women” and point out how this discourages a needed debate about public policy and the biggest problems facing our country.

Further Study

Read [Liberty Is No War on Women](#), by Carrie Lukas and Sabrina Schaeffer.