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New Poll on the Challenges Facing American Women

The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink finds that one in three American women lives on or over the brink of poverty

Washington, D.C. — Maria Shriver, the Center for American Progress, and AARP released the results of a comprehensive new poll that tests attitudes toward public policies that support women and families, breaks new ground on Millennials' opinions about government and families, explores what women living on the brink of poverty consider their biggest regrets, and what men and women think about marriage and divorce. The bipartisan poll, conducted by firms Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and TargetPoint Consulting, and sponsored by AARP, surveyed 3,500 Americans.

The poll finds that Americans recognize and applaud the growing role of women in our economy. Seventy-one percent of Americans—including an equal number of men and women—describe women's financial contributions to our national economy as essential; an insignificant 4 percent do not believe women play an essential role.

Additional key findings from the poll include:

- Women on the brink, identified as a family of four making \$47,000 per year, wish they had put a higher priority on their education. More than three quarters—77 percent—of low-income women wish they had put a higher priority on their education and career, compared to 58 percent of the general population.
- Most Americans—65 percent—wish they had made better financial choices, a finding that is even greater among economically marginalized women—77 percent.
- Women on the brink are less likely to be married. Forty-nine percent of men and women in this survey are married; this drops to 35 percent among African American women, 44 percent among those with no college education, and just 25 percent among low-income women. Low-income women are also more likely to regret the timing of their marriage. A majority—52 percent—of low-income women wish they had delayed marriage, compared to 33 percent of low-income men.
- Nearly 4 in 10—39 percent—of low-income mothers wished they had delayed having kids or had fewer of them. It is also worth noting that the low-income women who are not mothers are more likely than average to regret that choice—30 percent among low-income women; 18 percent overall.

The survey also finds that preretirement women ages 50 to 64 felt less financially secure in part due to the effects of a changing reality for American families with increasing responsibility for supporting parents who are living longer, as well as college-age and grown children who were born later in their lives. Fewer women can afford to concentrate on their careers and save for retirement with today's increasing family responsibilities; yet, they are called upon to provide economic stability for themselves and for their families in this new paradigm shift.

"AARP applauds *The Shriver Report* for spearheading a national conversation about women and financial security," said Nancy LeaMond, executive vice president at AARP. "For so many women today—working two jobs, fretting about retirement, worrying about caregiving responsibilities, and living alone into their elder years—day-to-day challenges squash opportunities for a better job, a better work-life balance, or a more secure future. By engaging our nation in this conversation, we can find common-sense solutions that will strengthen women, families, and our nation as a whole."

Download the report for free [here](#) through Thursday, January 16.

Learn more about *The Shriver Report* [here](#).

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About *The Shriver Report*:

The first *Shriver Report*, published in 2009, examined a huge transformation in U.S. history: For the first time, women had become fully half the workforce, and even more momentously, were about two-thirds of the primary and co-breadwinners in American families—truly the engine driving the economy. We called this new state of American affairs *A Woman's Nation Changes Everything*, as the explosion of women becoming breadwinners changed not just the economy, but marriage, families, schools, the workplace, government, health care—everything, including men. The following year, *A Woman's Nation Takes on Alzheimer's* was the largest study ever to examine the cultural, social, and economic impact of the Alzheimer's epidemic, just as the nation's 78 million Baby Boomers were aging into their mid-60s—Alzheimer's territory. We reported that women were not only half the people living with the disease but also more than half of the country's unpaid caregivers. *A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink* is the third in the series. For more information, please visit www.ShriverReport.org.

About AARP:

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.
