Two Articles on Discrimination in the Workplace

Featherstone on “Wal-Mart Values”

Four out of 10 American women shop at Wal-Mart weekly. Wal-Mart is also the nation’s largest private employer and a majority of their employees are women. The average wage is $7.50 per hour, not including health insurance, which only 40% of workers can afford.

“From the Third World factories in which its cheap products are made, to the floor of your local Wal-Mart, where they’re displayed and sold, it is women who bear the brunt of the company’s relentless cost-cutting.” Women make up 72% of the sales force but only 33% of managers. The article is filled with horror stories about Wal-Mart’s bad treatment of women.

Crittenden on “Sixty Cents to a Man’s Dollar”

Crittenden claims the pay gap is closer to 60¢ than 75¢ because the latter figure compares full-time men and women. But only half of mothers with children under 18 have full-time, year-round paying jobs.

There is a price to motherhood since women without children have a pay gap of only 90¢ vs. 70¢ for mothers.

Possible factors contributing to the price of motherhood: failure to provide paid maternity leave, heavy penalties for job interruptions, mandatory overtime, increased likelihood of working part-time (even if workloads are similar), increased likelihood of operating small businesses.

Occupations that require nurturing (e.g., child care, social work, nursing) are underpaid.

Men who are primary caregivers pay a “daddy tax.” This suggests that work rules, practices and habits “discriminate against anyone, of either sex, who cannot perform like an ‘unencumbered’ worker.”