

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Ask a Working Woman • *Survey 2002*

Women are working long hours, often with different schedules than their spouses or partners, and are concerned deeply about retirement security, health care and equal pay. On the job and in public policy, working women want changes that will strengthen families and build respect for work. These are among the findings of the Ask a Working Woman Survey 2002, conducted for the AFL-CIO by Lake Snell Perry & Associates Inc.

The survey is the third in a series designed to examine the pressures women face and the solutions they seek in their workplaces and through legislation.

“I work nights and am just getting ready to start a family. My husband also works nights. I want to be home with my baby but neither of us can get a day job for five to 10 years.”
(Lexington, Ky.)

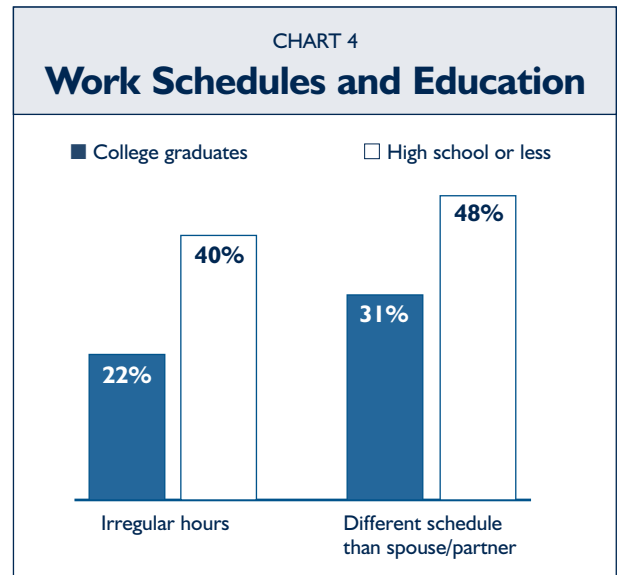
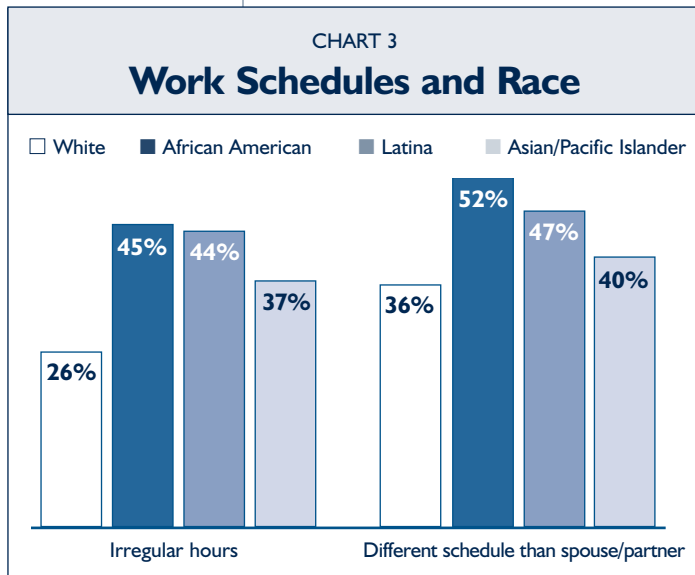
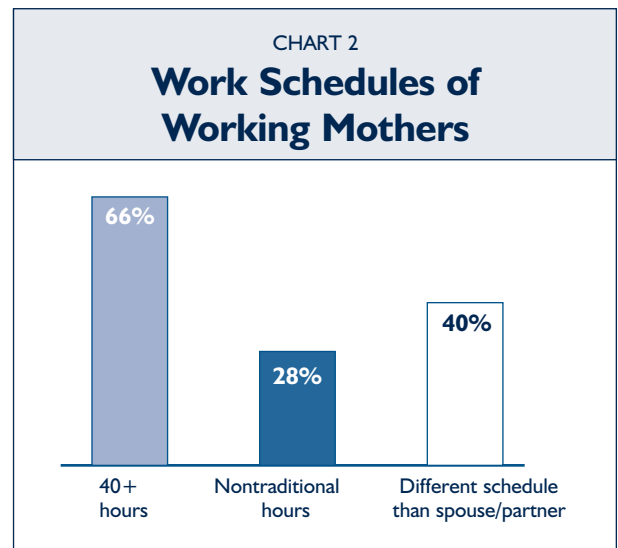
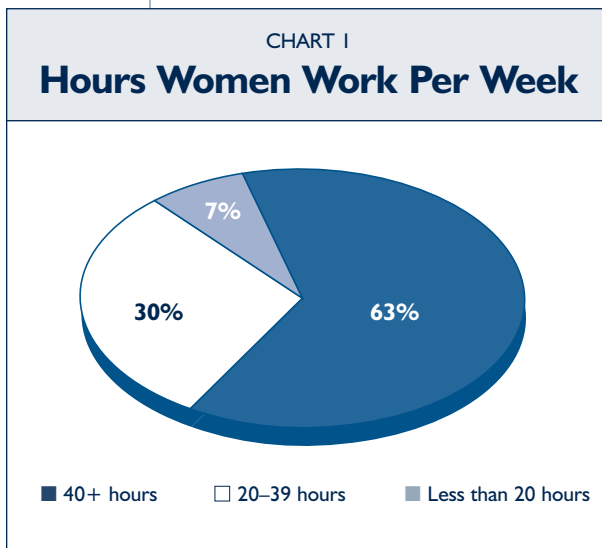
Working women work long and irregular hours.

NEARLY TWO OF THREE working women—63 percent—work 40 hours or more per week, a slight increase from 60 percent in 2000. Only 7 percent work less than 20 hours a week, the same proportion as in 2000. Sixty-six percent of mothers who work are on the job 40 hours or more, and 40 percent work different schedules than their spouses or partners. Surprisingly, married working mothers are even more likely to work long hours—68 percent work 40 or more hours a week.

For many working women, especially women of color and those without college degrees, the traditional 9-to-5, Monday-through-Friday workweek is increasingly not

the norm. Three of 10 working women work nontraditional shifts, including weekend and evening work. But the rate increases for Asian women (37 percent) and increases dramatically for African American women (45 percent), Latinas (44 percent) and women without a college education (40 percent).

Working women of color are more likely than white women to work different schedules than their spouses or partners. While the work schedules of 36 percent of white women differ from those of their spouses, for Asian women the rate is 40 percent, for African American women the rate is 52 percent and it is 47 percent for Latinas.



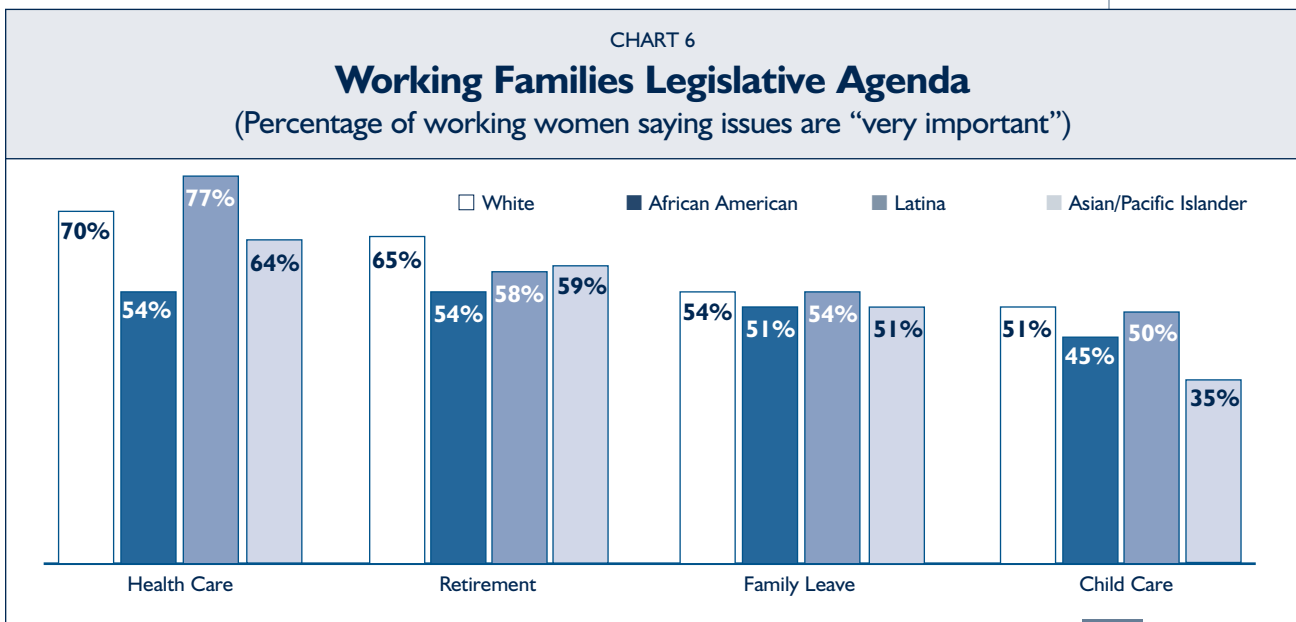
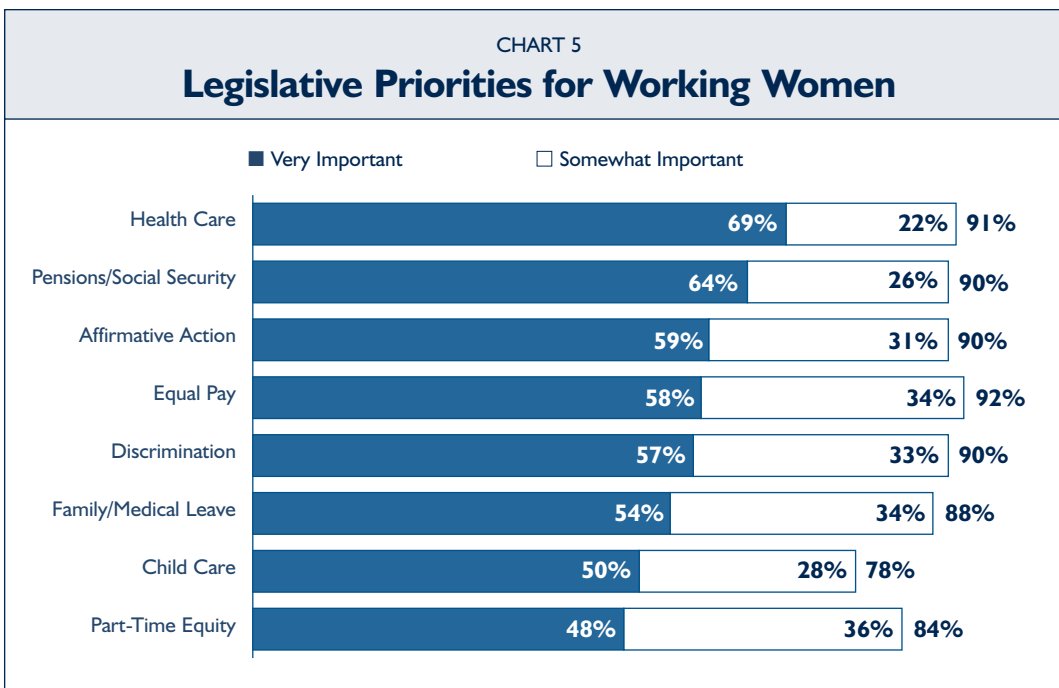
Working women increasingly are concerned about their basic benefits.

WORKING WOMEN ARE very concerned about benefits, especially health care and retirement security. Since 2000, the percentage of women who rate health care as a “highest priority” for change on the job jumped 11 points.

Working women by a large margin say they support a comprehensive legislative agenda that addresses such key concerns as making quality health care affordable, strengthening pensions and Social Security

and expanding family and medical leave and child care.

More than nine in 10 women (91 percent) rate an affordable health care law “important,” including 69 percent who consider it “very important”—a 12-point increase since 2000. Working women feel just as strongly about strengthening Social Security and pensions, with 90 percent calling it “important,” including 64 percent saying it is “very important.”



“I’m not getting paid enough to afford health care, housing, utilities, food. The only thing not going up is my pay.”
(Seattle, Wash.)

Working women support a strong job rights agenda.

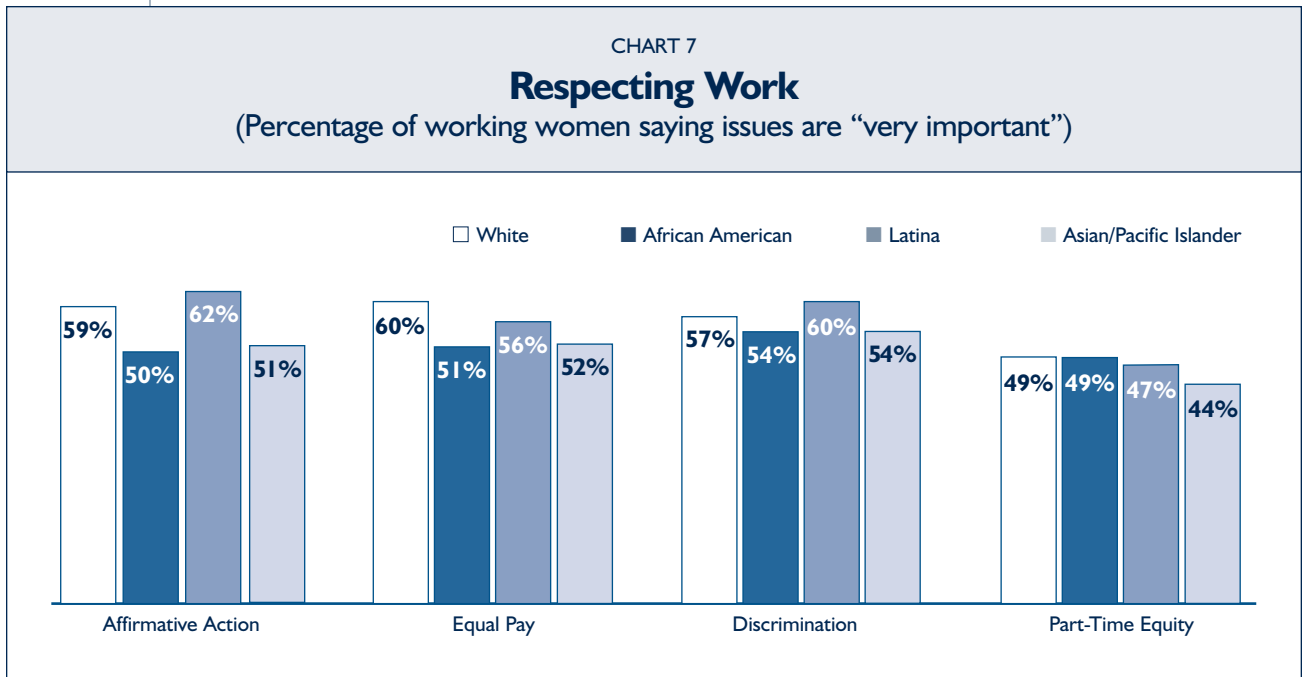
WORKING WOMEN WANT BETTER affirmative action laws to provide more opportunities for women, stronger equal pay laws and more effective laws to challenge discrimination and unfair treatment in the workplace and to ensure fair pay and benefits for part-time workers.

Women in all age groups back stronger affirmative action laws for women, with Latinas and white women most likely to say it is very important (62 percent and 59 percent, respectively). Half of African American women (50 percent) and Asian women (51 percent) agree that it is very important.

Fair treatment on the job—being free of discrimination and getting equal pay—

is a major concern for working women. Ninety-two percent of women say we need stronger laws to ensure equal pay. While every age group considers pay a top priority issue, it is particularly important to younger women workers, with 64 percent calling equal pay laws very important.

When it comes to discrimination, 90 percent of women say these laws are important; of these, 57 percent say they are very important. Latinas feel most strongly about tougher laws to challenge discrimination, with 60 percent calling them very important, compared with 57 percent of white women, 54 percent of African American women and 54 percent of Asian women.

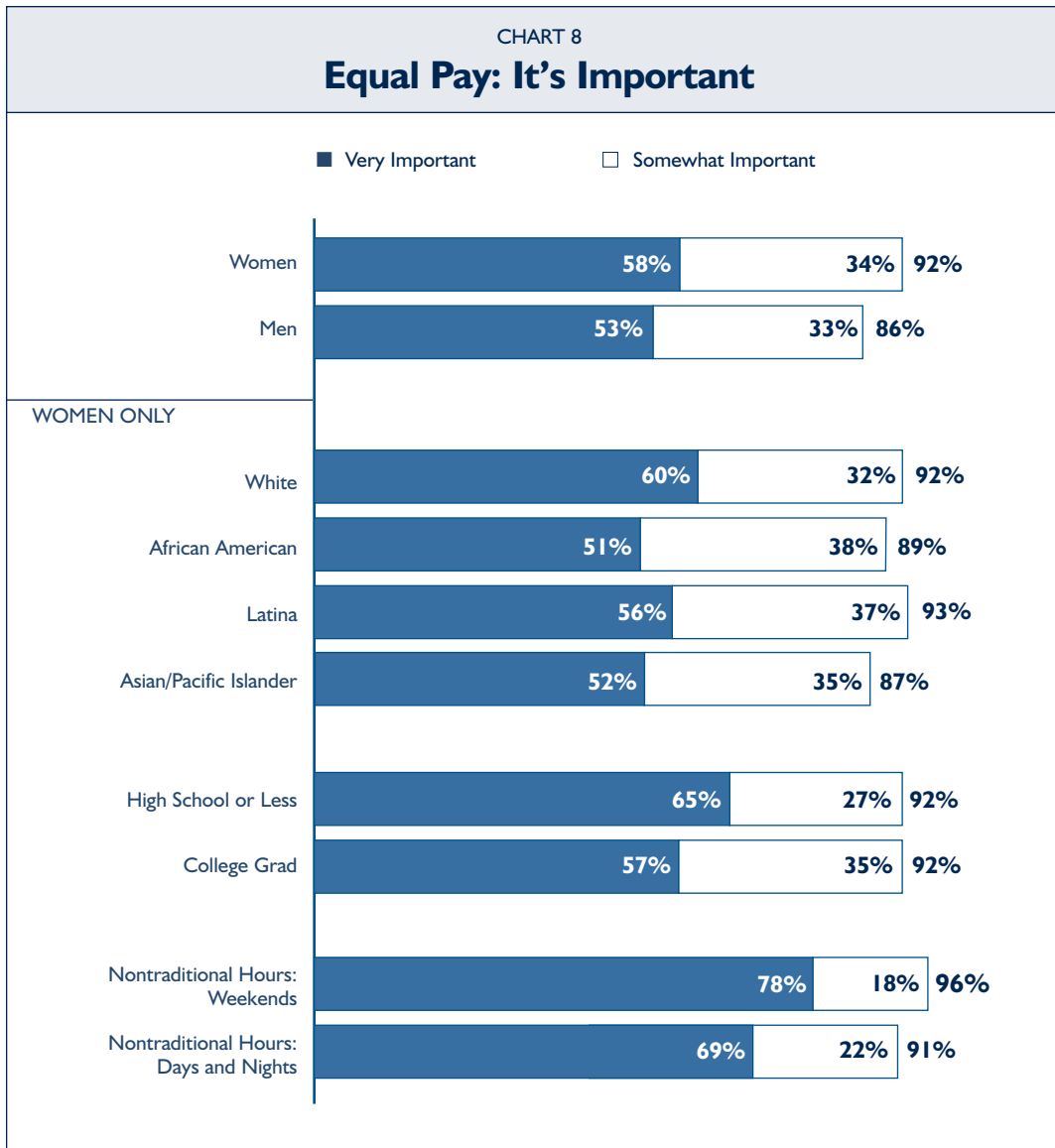


Working women support workers' freedom to choose a union.

TWO-THIRDS OF WORKING WOMEN say employees should be able to choose to form a union without employer interference. Nearly every group surveyed supports the right of workers to organize, with the strongest support from Latinas (72 percent),

40- to 49-year-olds (72 percent) and white women with children (71 percent). Only 27 percent of working women say employers should have a role in helping employees decide whether to form a union.

“[I worry] that I will have to work until I die—that even on a 40-year pension, it won’t be enough to live out a meager lifestyle....I will have to choose Meow Mix or Alpo.”
(North Arlington, N.J.)



Working men share working women’s concerns.

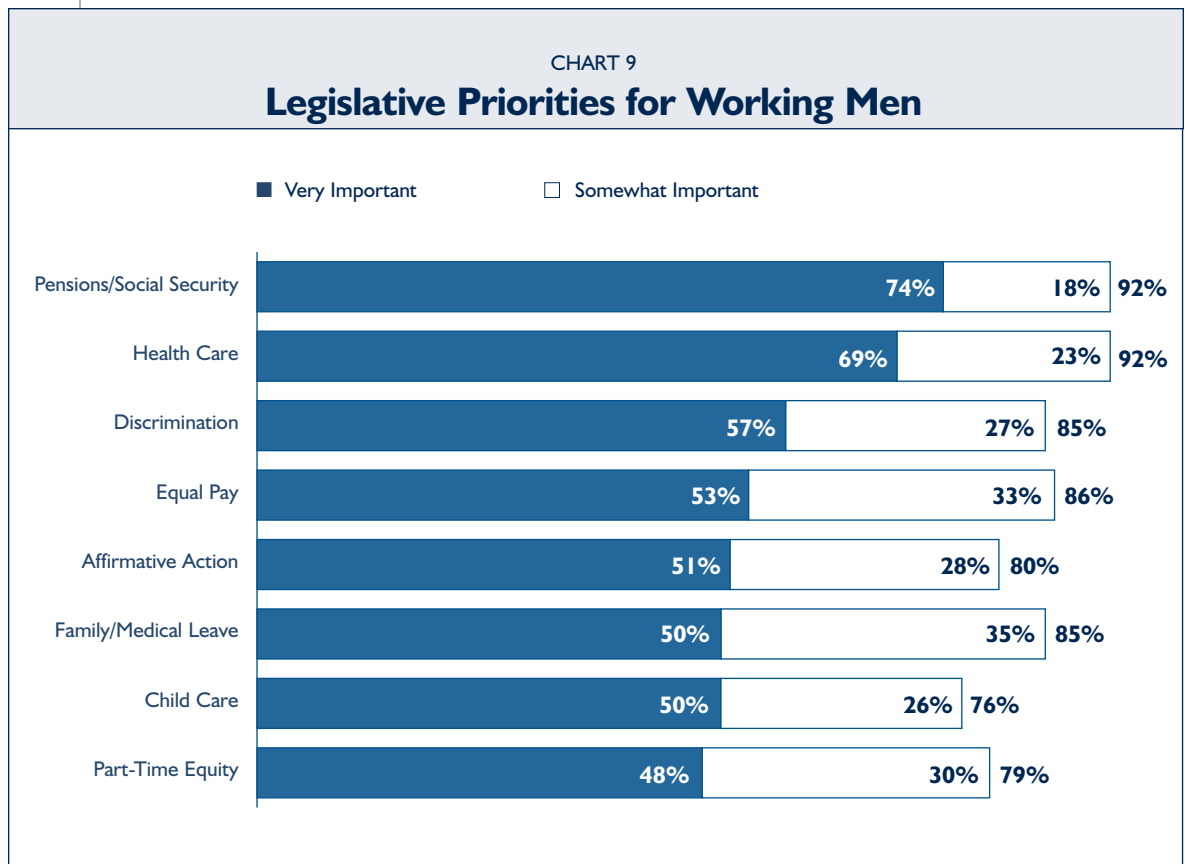
FOR THE FIRST TIME, the survey polled working men about their workplace concerns and found they agree with working women on many issues. Three of four working men (74 percent) rated strengthening pensions and Social Security as very important, followed by health care at 69 percent.

Half of working men—51 percent—say affirmative action for women is very important and even more—57 percent—believe

there should be better laws allowing women to challenge discrimination on the job.

On equal pay, the percentage of men who believe it is important (86 percent) is close to the rate among women (92 percent).

Working women and working men also place high-quality, affordable child care high on their priority list. Seventy-eight percent of women and 76 percent of men consider it important, with half of women and men saying it is very important.



Working mothers and women without children have similar views.

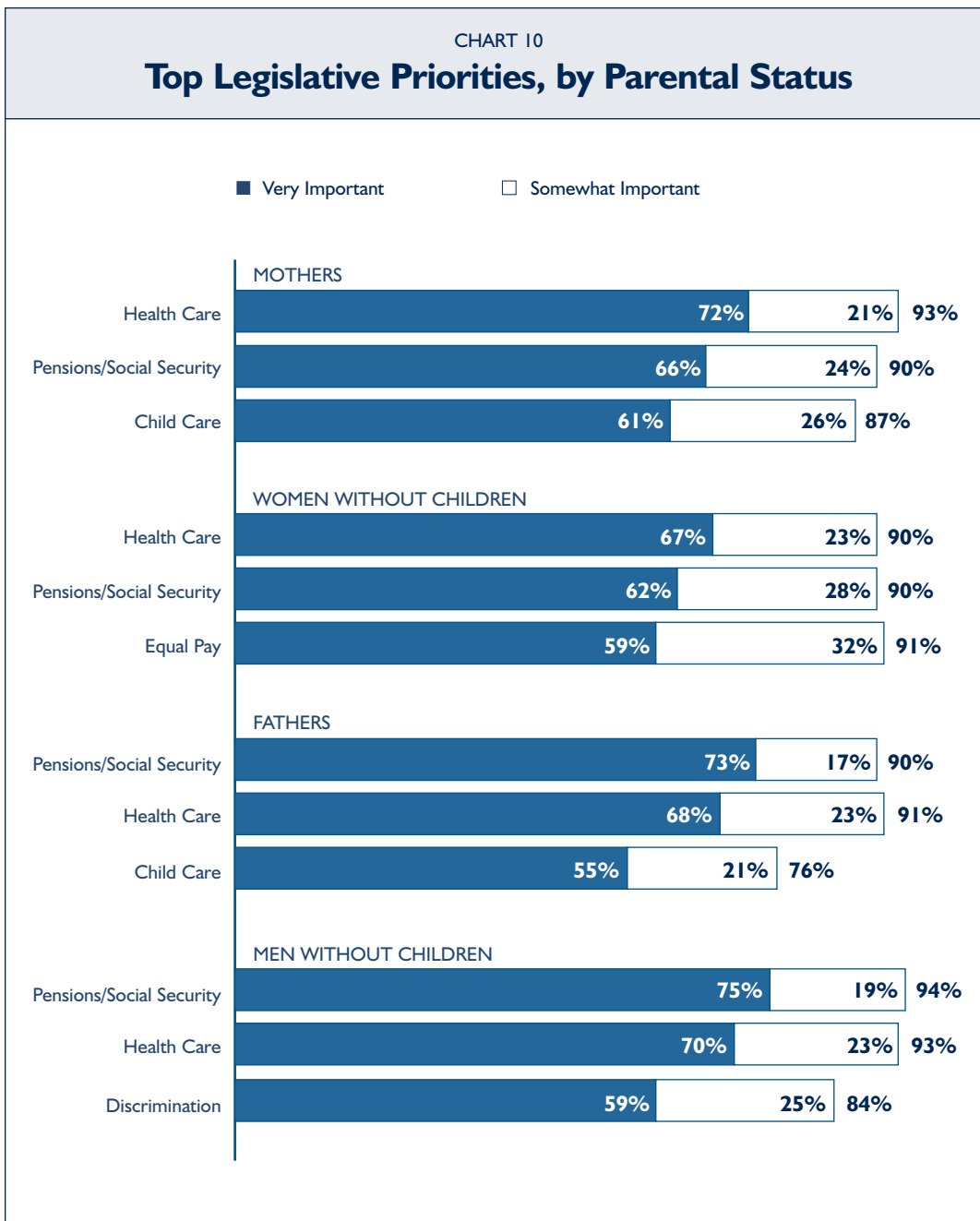
WHETHER THE ISSUE IS retirement security or equal pay laws or affordable health care, working mothers and women without children agree on their importance.

Ninety percent of both groups feel that strengthening pensions and Social Security is important (with 66 percent and 62 percent, respectively, saying it is very important). Ninety-three percent of mothers and 91 percent of women without children say

stronger equal pay laws are important (with 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively, considering them very important).

Both groups overwhelmingly support affordable health care, with 93 percent of mothers and 90 percent of women without children saying it is important, including 72 percent and 67 percent, respectively, saying it is very important.

“Will my pension and retiree benefits provide the same level of living as I have now? Will my children be able to provide for their families as I have?”
(West Mifflin, Pa.)



Methodology. Lake Snell Perry & Associates Inc. designed and conducted for the AFL-CIO a telephone survey of 1,250 women 18 and older nationwide that work outside the home. This includes an oversample of 100 Asian American women. In addition, the survey reached 350 men 18 and older nationwide. The survey was conducted between March 4 and 7, 2002. The telephone survey was part of a yearlong national effort that included a field survey of 20,000 working women.