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Women Fight Back Against The Lawyer Pay Divide

By **Erin Coe**

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Closing The Gap
Women Fight Back Against The Law Firm Pay Divide

By Erin Coe

October 31, 2016

The statistics keep coming. Across U.S. law firms, female equity partners make 80 percent of their male counterparts' pay. Last year, while the men were taking home $629,407, the women were averaging $504,000.

Despite graduating from law school in equal numbers as men for more than 15 years, women continue to be underrepresented in the industry's top echelons, accounting for just 18 percent of equity partners and 22 percent of attorneys serving on top governance committees, according to the National Association of Women Lawyers' 2015 report.

> Firms can't assume that women attorneys or partners aren't going to sue.
>
> — Jennifer Waters, executive director
> National Association of Women Lawyers

Over the last decade, little seems to have changed. While the percentage of women on governance committees has risen from 16 percent in 2006, the increase works out to the addition of one woman to the average firm's highest governance committee over a 10-year period. And while the percentage of female equity partners has nudged up from 16 percent in 2006, the pay gap between female and male equity partners was actually slightly narrower a decade ago, when women made 84 percent of what their male colleagues did, the report found.

When factoring in nonattorney roles, the pay gap is more pronounced. Among all the industries the U.S. Census Bureau surveyed in 2014, the legal industry had one of the highest gender gaps for median pay, with the women on average earning just over half of what the men did in positions ranging from attorneys and judges to law clerks and legal support.

Earlier this month, legal consultancy Major Lindsey & Africa added yet another statistic to the mix: While pay is going up for both male and female law firm partners, the men on average make 44

percent more than the women. Factors like origination and billing rates are contributing to the divide.

But after years of lagging behind on pay equity, the legal industry may soon reach its tipping point. Lawsuits by women accusing firms of gender bias in their pay practices are bringing a renewed focus to the issue at a time when fiery rhetoric on the presidential campaign trail on issues of gender equality is spurring women across the country to take a stand. The cultural momentum, combined with a new wave of pay equity legislation making it easier to prove claims in court, could result in the kind of widespread litigation that finally forces changes in the legal industry, experts say.

"People were not comfortable bringing these suits historically because of the potential impact on their future employability, but the new trend is people are willing to put their name on a suit like this," said Jennifer Waters, executive director of NAWL. "Firms can't assume that women attorneys or partners aren't going to sue."

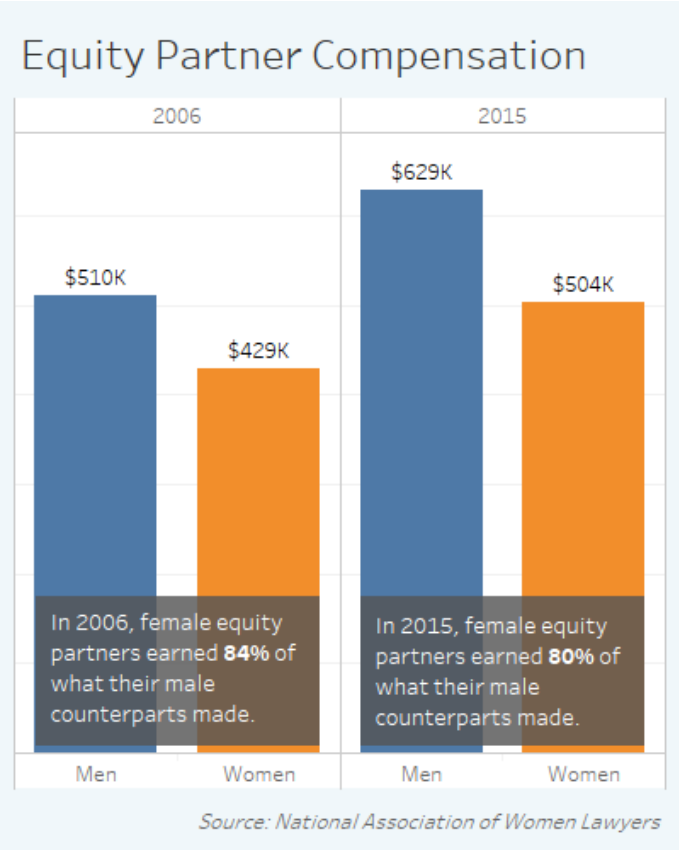
Traci Ribeiro, a partner at Sedgwick LLP in Chicago, is one of several attorneys suing over pay bias this year. (John Boehm)

Taking a Stand

Traci Ribeiro was attending a meeting as a nonequity partner at Sedgwick LLP in 2012 when she noticed something strange. Despite having graduated law school around the same time, some female associates were being paid less than comparable men — a lot less. One was earning $50,000 less a

year and another $40,000 less, she says, despite the fact that the women had higher billable hour rates and were bringing in more profits. When she raised the issue, the firm said it would investigate, according to Ribeiro, who detailed the allegations in a later lawsuit.

Ribeiro also raised concerns about her own compensation. But instead of getting a straight answer, she was told at one point in front of a group of equity partners that she "needed to learn to behave," the suit says. She continued to succeed in her insurance practice, becoming the third highest revenue-generator at Sedgwick in 2015 based on origination of billings collected, but her compensation still fell behind that of her male colleagues, she says. As she was passed over for equity partner year after year while men with similar or lower performances advanced, she began to sense she was being punished.



"The firm made me feel that by challenging my compensation, I was being greedy, as opposed to wanting to be paid fairly," she told Law360 in an interview. "When you find out your male counterparts are making the same as you and they are not doing close to what you did, it's humiliating — there's no better word for it."

At the time the suit was filed in July, Chairman Michael Healy issued a statement denying the firm had engaged in discrimination or retaliation in the partner compensation process "or otherwise." The federal judge overseeing her case said earlier this month that U.S. Supreme Court precedent would likely force him to send the proposed class action to arbitration. Sedgwick did not respond to a request seeking comment for this story.

The firm's briefs seeking to arbitrate the dispute characterize Ribeiro as no shrinking violet, indicating the fight over Ribeiro's claims that she was unfairly compensated and passed over for equity partner could also get personal in nature.

"Her self-serving portrayal as a frail powerless pushover is belied by the representations she has made to her fellow partners and clients for years, that she is an insightful, strong, tough litigator ready to advance the client's interests," the firm said in its reply to compel arbitration. "Plaintiff is not a naif who was coerced into signing the partnership agreement she now seeks to disclaim."

In the last year, the legal industry has been rife with similar allegations of pay discrimination. A former shareholder of LeClairRyan sued the firm in January saying she was forced to resign after complaining of discriminatory pay practices. In April, Farmers Insurance Co. paid female attorneys $4.1 million to settle a proposed class action alleging they were paid less than their male colleagues. This summer, a Chadbourne & Parke LLP litigation partner upped the ante, filing a $100 million proposed class action against the firm over pay bias in August. And last week, a former general counsel of commodity trading company Gerald Metals LLC filed an age and sex discrimination case claiming she was repeatedly underpaid in comparison to her younger, male colleagues.

The allegations are not limited to the world of corporate law. In July, a former Vermont County prosecutor accused the Rutland County State's Attorneys Office of paying her about $14,000 less a year than a male prosecutor in the same position. In September, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission accused the University of Denver's Sturm College of Law of violating the Equal Pay Act by paying female law professors less than their male colleagues. And this month, the city of Anaheim, California, reached a $1.45 million settlement to resolve a discrimination suit by a Hispanic female city attorney in her 50s who claimed she was forced to resign and then replaced by a younger and less experienced white man whose starting pay was higher than her final salary.

A University of Denver representative said it is committed to compensating its faculty fairly and equitably. While it disputes the claims asserted by the EEOC, the university said it will continue to explore a "fair, just and prompt" resolution with the agency. The Rutland County State's Attorneys office, the city of Anaheim and Gerald Metals did not respond to requests seeking comment.

Few plaintiffs want to put their career or reputation on the line by suing their employers, but some say they felt they had no other choice, especially as study after study has shown female attorneys' pay and promotion opportunities lag behind those of their male colleagues.

"It's stunning that our profession has the worst track record for gender disparity," said Kerrie Campbell, one of the named plaintiffs suing Chadbourne. "There's no excuse for it. Talk and data are meaningless without action. Somebody has to take a stand."

National Momentum

Why female lawyers may be less afraid to pursue pay discrimination litigation is not easy to pinpoint, but greater awareness — ranging from the fiery discourse on gender issues that has fueled the presidential campaign to recent equal pay legislation and regulatory activity — may be part of the answer.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has drawn fire for allegedly harassing and groping women and for making various denigrating remarks, such as calling a former Miss Universe names like "Miss Piggy" or mocking Republican presidential candidate Carly Fiorina's appearance by saying: "Look at that face. Would anyone vote for that?" At the same time, Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has come under scrutiny for being too calculated and not relatable, putting issues of gender bias front and center in the campaign.

"The stereotype is that women are emotional and men are not, but if you're watching the presidential campaign … it's the reverse," said Andrea Kramer, a partner at McDermott Will & Emery LLP and author of "Breaking Through Bias."

The stereotype also applies in law firms, she said: "If a woman is seen as too weak and too nice, a firm may question why to give her an important project or put her on a big case. And if she's too strong, she's seen as untrustworthy, unlikeable and only out for herself. It's the Goldilocks dilemma. For women, they are too hard or too soft, but rarely just right."

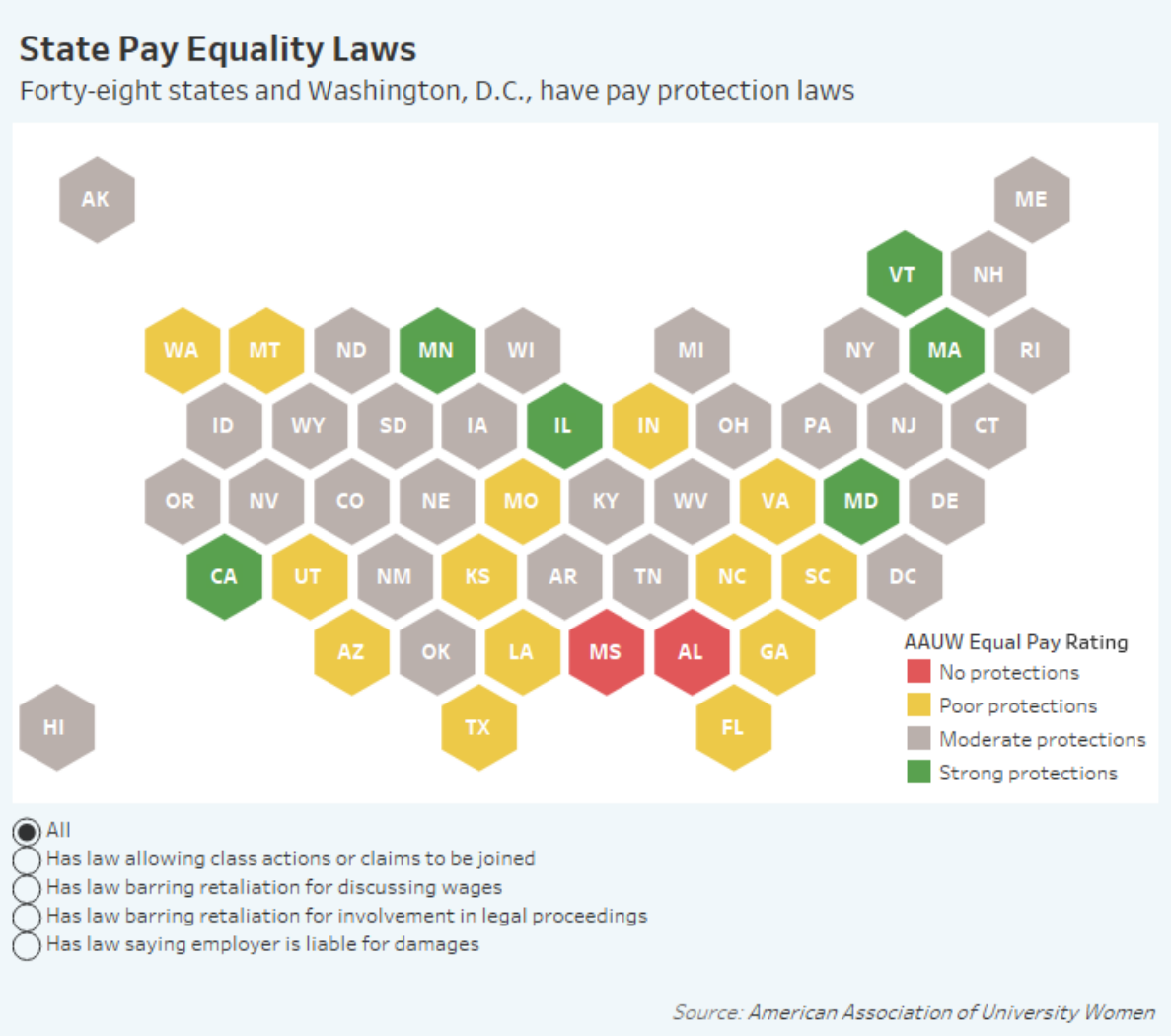
As the national conversation on gender bias plays out, a number of states have passed new laws trying to prevent women from being paid less than men for comparable work. The governor of Massachusetts in August signed an equal pay measure that allows employees to freely discuss their salaries with co-

workers, prohibits employers from requiring applicants to provide their salary history before receiving a formal job offer, and authorizes the state's attorney general to issue regulations interpreting and applying the statute. California, Maryland and New York also have put in place pay equity laws this year or last.

On the regulatory front, the EEOC in September finalized a regulation that will require thousands of businesses to disclose more information about employee compensation in an effort to better combat pay discrimination. And the U.S. Department of Labor has targeted several companies over alleged unfair compensation. The department sued Analogic Corp. in October, claiming the Massachusetts technology company engaged in discriminatory pay practices against female assembly workers. Another business, the Genlyte Thomas Group LLC, entered into a $275,000 conciliation deal this month to resolve the DOL's claims that the Boston lighting fixtures company paid its female professionals less than similarly situated males without admitting liability. Analogic and Genlyte did not respond to requests seeking comment.

High-profile suits also have kept gender issues firmly in the spotlight. Former Fox News anchor Gretchen Carlson's sexual harassment suit against her ex-boss, Roger Ailes, led to a reported $20 million settlement in September. Former Reddit interim CEO Ellen Pao was unsuccessful in her gender bias trial against former employer Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers LLC last year, but the suit against the venture capital firm nevertheless struck a chord that is still reverberating across many professions.

"Even though Ellen Pao lost her case, it has been a huge catalyst for women being angry and being willing to say, 'These discrepancies exist, and we're not going to let that pass,'" said Patricia Gillette, a JAMS mediator and frequent speaker on diversity and women's issues in business.



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With so much litigation on pay equity, both in the legal industry and across various professions, some believe it's only a matter of time before law firms are forced to make changes that begin to shrink the pay gap.

"I think it's reasonable to believe that as gender and pay equity issues become more discussed and more barriers are broken in different industries, it will encourage more women to come forward and pursue their own cases," said David A. Lowe, a Rudy Exelrod Zieff & Lowe LLP lawyer who represents employees in employment disputes. "They will see this as a larger problem and that other women are impacted the way that they are."

More female attorneys may bring pay discrepancy suits because they are one of the easiest kind of bias cases to prove, said Kamee Verdrager, a former Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo PC associate whose long-running gender discrimination suit against the firm was revived by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in May.

"Compensation at law firms, more than any other metric, has more non-subjective criteria than it does subjective criteria," she said. "With pay, when you have women working the same or greater hours, and generating the same or more business, then you cannot easily explain away the differences with highly subjective and illusive metrics. A jury … can certainly figure out when the math doesn't add up."

Compensation Structure

Several months after joining Chadbourne & Parke as an equity partner in January 2014, Campbell made a disturbing discovery: She had been awarded fewer partnership points than similarly or less productive male partners, and as a result, she was "destined to make two or three times less" than her male counterparts did, according to her lawsuit.

"It was like being hit in the stomach with a bat," Campbell, who practices consumer product safety and First Amendment law, told Law360.

Chadbourne & Parke partner Kerrie Campbell is suing the firm in a $100 million class action. (Meredith Hook)

Partnership points play a role in the way many firms determine compensation, and they can take into account factors such as how much business partners are expected to generate in the coming year. Campbell alleges she eventually requested that her partnership points be increased, but she was told

that the $2.8 million in collections she had brought in during 2014 were a "fluke" and that she would have to "prove" her ability to generate revenue before the all-male management committee would consider an increase. She was retaliated against soon after, she says, and several of her client relationships were ruined because the firm refused to help her adequately staff her matters.

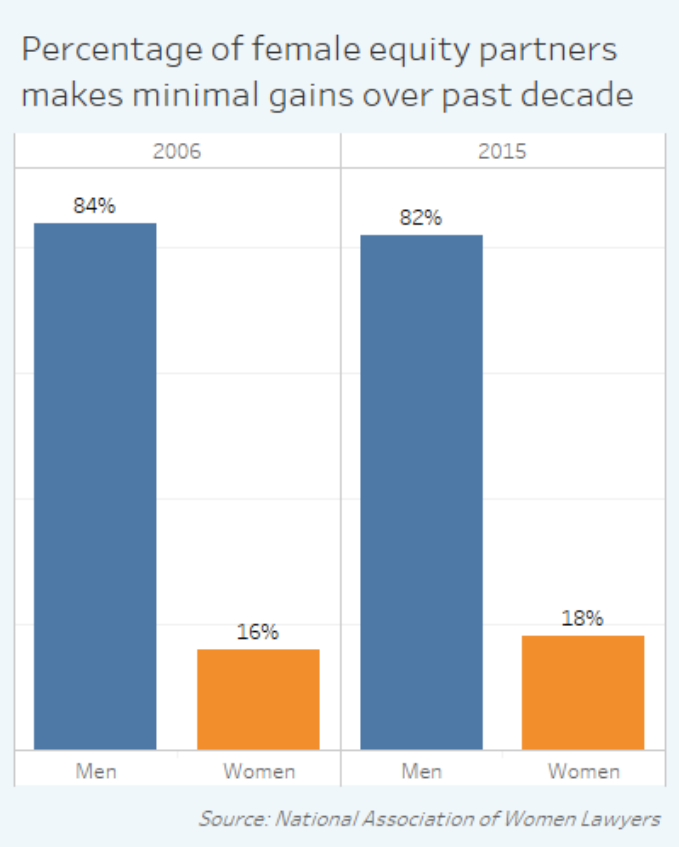
The firm notified her in February of this year that her practice no longer fit with the firm and she should start looking elsewhere, even though she had generated more than $5 million for Chadbourne in less than three years, according to her suit. It was then that she confronted the management committee.

"I asked how my practice no longer fit when it fit perfectly when the firm brought me in and based on what I've produced," she said. "I said the decision was punitive, retaliatory and unjustified, but I didn't get any traction. The minute I left the room after that meeting, I heard a loud laugh, and I believe it was intended to make me feel small."

Campbell's suit, filed in a federal New York court in August, claims that Chadbourne routinely awarded female partners lower numbers of partnership points compared with male partners. She alleges that in 2013, the number of points allotted to male partners ranged from 250 to 2,250, while those allotted to female partners ranged from 400 to 900, and that subsequent years showed a similar gap.

In an unusual move, nearly all of the current female partners at Chadbourne signed a letter in September to Campbell's attorney, David Sanford of Sanford Heisler LLP, saying he was using them to inflate the potential damages in the suit without having asked them about their experiences at the firm. Sanford responded that New York state law prevented him from soliciting them as clients, so he couldn't have spoken with them about the suit before he filed the complaint.

The firm has categorically denied all of the suit's allegations against it, including gender discrimination. Out of Chadbourne's 82 equity partners, 16 are women, or 19.5 percent, which is consistent with industry averages, and its management committee has had a female partner serve on it in the past and has one currently, a Chadbourne representative told Law360.



Historically, firms have compensated their partners using a formula that relied almost entirely on origination credit, which is based on the clients an attorney brings into the firm, and hours billed on legal matters. The role of origination credit in determining compensation is one of the main reasons the law firm compensation structure is considered biased. Across the industry, women receive less credit than men for client work, according to NAWL's 2015 study, which found that 88 percent of firms' top 10 revenue generators were men and 12 percent were women, a drop from 16 percent in 2013.

The system is problematic not only because of the challenges women face participating in the same networking opportunities with clients as their male colleagues, but often because of the way origination is credited, which may not reflect the contributions of women in obtaining or keeping the client.

In the suit filed earlier this year against LeClairRyan, former shareholder Michele Burke Craddock claims she served as co-lead counsel in a 2012 case that helped garner the firm one of the largest fee recoveries in its history but was denied credit for re-establishing a relationship with the client in the case. She also claims the firm changed its "extraordinary bonus" policy from an objective point-based system to a subjective, discretionary system, and she was denied much of what she would have received under the original system.

"Ms. Craddock had far and away one of the most successful cases in history, resulting in the firm receiving over $23.5 million in fees … but she was not given credit on originations and billings for the client in stark contrast to the way male shareholders were treated," said Harris Butler, a Butler Royals PLC attorney representing Craddock. "The firm attempted to undermine her and shut her down."

In its motion to compel arbitration, the firm disputed several of Craddock's claims, noting that she'd received one of the firm's largest-ever bonuses and that she had been bumped up a year on the promotion eligibility list for outstanding work on a major case for the firm.

Laurie Thompson, LeClairRyan's assistant general counsel, told Law360 the firm believes Craddock's claims are groundless and noted that the firm has been recognized as a top firm for female attorneys. The firm won its bid to arbitrate the case in April.

Some firms, like Jones Day, don't have origination credits in an effort to value more fairly the work that different lawyers are putting into a case or deal, while other firms, like Jackson Lewis PC, share origination credits liberally in order to encourage collaboration and teamwork. For example, if a partner gets a call from a potential client, and the partner and three other attorneys meet with the potential client and retain its business, all four attorneys will get 100 percent of the origination credit, the firm said. There are also firms that consider additional factors when determining compensation, such as whether a client returns, according to Waters, the NAWL executive director.

"Certain firms are recognizing that there are different ways to value the importance of contributions that men and women make to the firm and their clients," Waters said.

Determining what individual partners should receive in compensation often involves complex decisions as well as a series of factors that are weighed differently depending on the firm, according to Jon Lindsey, New York founding partner of Major Lindsey & Africa. When firms don't operate under a lockstep structure, compensation decisions at many firms tend to be based in large part on originations, which center on the revenue attorneys are bringing into the firm, and working attorney receipts, which focus on how much work is being generated based on attorneys' billable rate multiplied by their billable hours and their realization rate.

While Major Lindsey & Africa's survey found that male partners made 44 percent more than female partners, the survey also showed that male partners had, on average, higher billable hours, billing rates, working attorney receipts and — perhaps most significantly — 50 percent higher originations than female partners, and those higher numbers would likely translate to bigger compensation.

"While there are undoubtedly individual cases of inequity, it is too simplistic to say firm compensation systems are unfair solely because male partners are, on average, earning more," Lindsey said. "If you look at the key factors that most firms used to determine partner compensation, particularly originations, the gap is not wildly out of line."

At the same time, he noted that it was possible that in any given case, women were not being credited properly for work they originated.

"If there is bias, it may be more in how originations may be credited to any given individual rather than how attorneys are valued for identical contributions," he said. "The problem that many female partners complain about is they go on a pitch and help in bringing in the work, and then a senior partner grabs a disproportionate share of the credit. If that's the case, it is not fair. … And while progress is being made, the people handing out the work on the client side are still predominantly male."

Firms are making efforts to be more conscious of how they make compensation decisions by diversifying their compensation committees to better reflect their partnerships as a whole, and some are even penalizing attorneys who are perceived as hogging credit for landing new business or clients, Lindsey said.

As more firms have open or partially open compensation systems, in which attorneys are able to review partnership points and see who is rewarded for what, many women are likely to assess the numbers

and take action when they see stark differences.

"Despite the diversity of explanations by firms for why women are underpaid relative to men, it all distills to the same thing: a discretionary pay structure and the perception that men are more valuable," said Debra Katz, founder of civil rights and whistleblower firm Katz Marshall & Banks LLP in Washington, D.C.

Double Standards

One Delaware mass tort litigator has seen the BigLaw value system firsthand. The attorney, who declined to be named, recalled being in a meeting on partner promotions when it was mentioned that a female candidate wasn't at risk of leaving because she wasn't married. The male attorney, on the other hand, was the breadwinner of his family, and the firm had to make sure to keep him. While both attorneys were equally qualified, it was clear who was valued more, the attorney said.

When the attorney moved to a plaintiffs firm, she encountered a partner agreement stipulating that if any lawyer left for maternity reasons, that lawyer's points would be reduced and accrual would be suspended while on leave, a clause she viewed as essentially penalizing women for taking leave.

"As the only female attorney in the room, I thought, 'Gee, I wonder which partners are going to go on maternity leave,'" she said. "The provision was clearly directed toward women."

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>
> — Traci Ribeiro

Reintegrating women after maternity leave has been particularly challenging for law firms. When a high-performing associate becomes pregnant, partners' sex stereotypes can lead to a domino effect of fewer assignments, fewer billable hours and poor evaluations that can harm women's career trajectories, Katz said.

"It's a vicious cycle," Katz said. "When partners avoid assigning female attorneys cases that require travel, that will generate many hours and that give opportunities to deepen client relationships, they are depriving women of opportunities for advancement."

But when it comes to work-life balance, the different attitudes some firms take toward men can seem like a double standard.

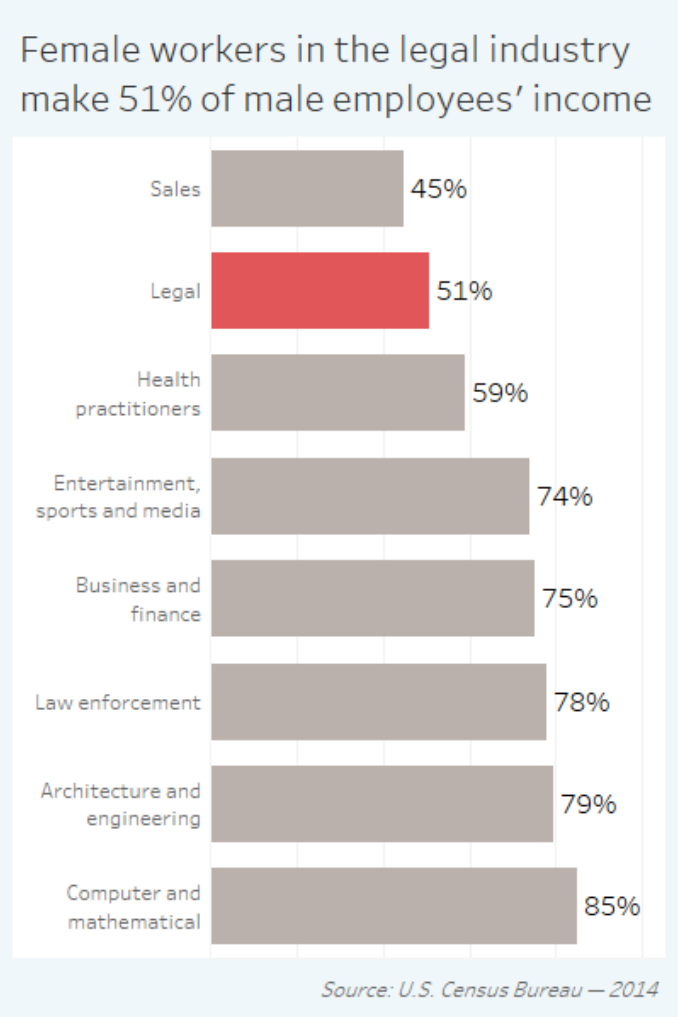
"When working in a BigLaw firm, women must work twice as hard and be twice as good to be seen as average compared to men," said Verdrager, the attorney suing Mintz Levin. "Women are questioned once they have children, and their commitment and loyalty to the firm are suspect. But if a male attorney leaves early to coach his Little League team, he's looked at like he's a hero."

Verdrager alleges in her suit that the firm gave her bad performance reviews and assignments, demoted her — which affected the pay she received — and eventually fired her after she complained about sexual harassment from one of her superiors. A trial date is set for April. A Mintz Levin representative declined to comment. The firm said earlier this year it was confident "the claims have no merit and that we will prevail at trial."

Battle Weary

Even women who've reached the pinnacle of their careers can struggle to get equal pay for equal work. While she's now one of the highest paid attorneys at her firm, one equity partner told Law360 she has had to wrangle repeatedly over her two decades of practicing law to get compensation and bonuses that are similar to what her male counterparts receive.

"The fact that my compensation is one of the highest reflects favorably on me today, but I had to fight for that tooth and nail, including as recently as one year ago when I told the firm it needed to pay me more money because I'm one of the top generators and relationship builders for the firm," said the partner, who declined to be named. "I don't know that there will ever be a time when I'm not fighting for my compensation while working within a large firm setting."



She said she learned early not to settle. After managing several cases and having excelled, she returned from maternity leave as a midlevel associate at her first firm, which was made up of mostly men, and the firm soon put her on document review. The move struck her as odd, particularly as she saw a male colleague with whom she summered staying busy running cases and getting good assignments.

"I sensed that the partners were not focused on me or my skillset, but on the fact that I was a woman who had a baby and now was back, and they didn't know what to do with me," she said.

With hopes of developing into a successful litigator, she moved over to her current firm just months after returning from maternity leave in the 1990s. But she ran into other obstacles, like facing criticism from both male and female

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colleagues that she was landing major cases and gaining promotions not based on her expertise, but because of her looks or because she was power hungry.

And then there was the issue of pay. One year, she tussled with the firm after finding out that a male lawyer, who had been at the firm a year or two longer but who was from her same year, scored a bonus that was more than $10,000 higher than what she received, even though her work and hours were substantially distinct enough to warrant the same financial recognition or at least less of a financial differential, she said. And another time, a male partner received the same amount of partnership points as her even though he was not on any governance committees like herself and had received negative evaluations.

"Every few years I felt I was having to say, 'Hey, wait a minute,'" she said. "I would have to lay out my record and say, 'If you haven't noticed, this is what I've achieved.'"

Forty-three percent of nearly 500 young female attorneys said that they have experienced gender bias during their careers, according to the results of a survey by the Florida Bar that were released earlier this year. Many had stories of not being compensated in line with their male colleagues.

"The Equal Pay Act is being violated by a lot of law firms, especially the ones who hire staff attorneys to do substantially the same job as associates for 2/3 of the price," one female attorney wrote. "Overall, despite the liberal maternity leave policies, female attorneys in Big Law struggle with the traditional law firm model and old school mentality."

Another attorney said she was paid less than male colleagues who had the same or less experience, fewer billable hours and less origination.

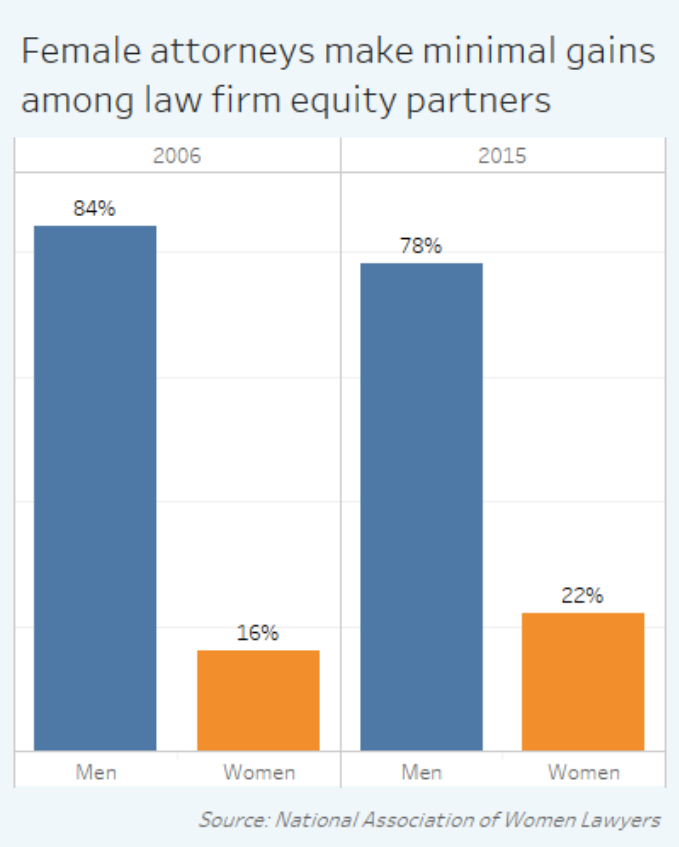
"When I provided proof of the gender-biased pay, I was ignored by one firm and subsequently left, and, at the other firm, I was told by the managing partner that they'd see about paying me more 'the

next year,'" the attorney wrote. "I was told by my practice group director that I should be thankful for making less because I'd pay less alimony in my divorce."

Strength in Numbers

Even if pay bias litigation isn't initially successful, it still can push employers to make significant changes. Take, for example, an ongoing case against the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University board of trustees brought by law professor Jennifer Smith in 2014 that alleges the law school paid male and female faculty unequally.

A Florida federal jury in July 2015 reached a verdict that gender was not a motivating factor for the university's determination of Smith's original salary or for its repeated denials of a promotion and that the university did not retaliate against Smith for complaining of gender discrimination. The court later denied Smith's attempts for a new trial and to set aside the judgment, decisions that are being appealed by Smith.



Meanwhile, the university conducted a study that found women were underpaid compared to men, and it increased the salaries of female faculty this year by $2,300 to $24,000, a move that positively affected Smith's salary as well as the pay of other women at the law school, according to Smith's lawyer, Stephen M. Smith. Her lawyer noted that additional increases are necessary to bring the women into complete equity with the men.

"It is not easy being the tip of the spear, but my client's lawsuit … has encouraged the students, especially the female students, to see that while she lost the battle for now, professor Smith won the war," her lawyer said. "Pay equity is getting more traction in the United States and at the university because of professor Smith's courage."

The university did not respond to a request seeking comment.

As litigation over pay bias in the legal industry picks up, firms will be forced to think harder about their pay practices and assess whether they are equitable, according to Gillette, the JAMS mediator. While some firms may be inclined to shift to closed compensation systems and provide attorneys with even less transparency, those firms face the risk of having their systems forced open if they are sued.

"Some firms will be more open to taking a look at whether their compensation decisions make sense in the cold light of day," Gillette said. "They will look at an attorney's billables, receivables, hours and contributions to the firm and come up with an amount. The step firms often miss is once they've done that, they need to step back and look at all of the decisions they've made and do some kind of pay equity analysis."

If firms find that there are pay disparities between male and female attorneys, the next question to ask is why. While firms may have a good explanation, going through the process can be enlightening, particularly if they find bias caused a disparity 10 years ago and that disparity has grown as the attorney goes through her career.

"Was there potential in the history of an attorney's compensation for biases to creep in and negatively impact compensation?" Waters said. "If a woman's compensation starts off behind, it's pretty difficult to catch up."

For the women who've sued, the amount of litigation is encouraging. Verdrager said she's happy to see suits filed by attorneys in positions of power and hopes they encourage law firms to look for ways to treat male and female attorneys fairly.

"As long as there continues to be a perception that anyone who speaks out will be destroyed and that nothing different will happen, nothing will happen," she said. The lawsuits, she said, suggest a turn of the tide, and "there is strength in numbers."

For Campbell, who is now a "partner in transition," life at Chadbourne can be awkward and isolating. She hasn't heard from the management committee since it told her in April that its decision for her to move on was final, and attorneys become visibly panicked if it looks as if she is going to get on the elevator with them, she said.

"Nobody wants to [sue his or her firm]," she said. "It doesn't put you in a good position to find your next job or maintain your practice, and it puts stress on your family."

But she remains steadfast. Many, if not most, of the partners at Chadbourne and other firms have experienced or are aware of blatant or subtle gender discrimination and have stayed silent, she said.

"Continued inaction by sticking one's head in the sand is the same thing as facilitating discrimination," she said. "If we all don't work together and acknowledge and rectify the problem, we're not living up to the purpose and whole objective of our profession. We are supposed to stand for fairness and justice for all people."

*Erin Coe is a feature reporter for Law360. She **last wrote** about the ever-rising salaries of BigLaw associates.*

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