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A Third of U.S. Jobs Pay 'Low Wages'

by *Jessica Azulay*

Mar. 19 – A new analysis has found that some 44 million American jobs – about one out of every three positions in the United States – pays \$11.11 per hour or less.

The report, published by researchers at a think tank called Inclusion, also says those jobs are less likely than higher paying work to include benefits like health insurance, retirement accounts or paid time off. Inclusion is affiliated with the progressive Center for Economic and Policy Research.

According to the report, the median wage for men in the United States is \$16.66 per hour, which means that half of men make more than that wage and half make less. The researchers defined low-wage jobs as those paying less than two-thirds of the median male wage.

"In short," wrote the researchers, "our preferred definition of low-wage work is any job that pays substantially less than the job held by a typical male worker."

The researchers' analysis of US Bureau of Labor statistics found that the occupation with the most low-wage jobs is retail sales. Of the 4.3 million retail-sales workers in the country, half made less than \$9.20 per hour, according to the report. Low-wage jobs are also concentrated in the fields of food preparations and serving; building and groups maintenance; healthcare support; personal care; and farming, fishing and forestry occupations.

The economists plotted low-wage work over time since 1979, and found that in the late 1990s low-wage jobs began paying more until 2001, when their wages were up by 5 percent over 1979's figures. But, according to the report, since then, low-wages have fallen back to almost the 1979 levels.

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