



Women in Obama White House earn less than men, amid 'equal pay' debate

Published October 19, 2012 - FoxNews.com



President Barack Obama speaks at a campaign event at Veteran's Memorial Park, Thursday, Oct. 18, 2012, in Manchester, N.H. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

President Obama and his surrogates ripped into Mitt Romney over the past week for allegedly being wishy-washy on the matter of "equal pay" -- part of the campaign's aggressive appeal to vital female voters.

But despite all the rhetoric, federal records show that women who work in the Obama White House generally earn less than men -- about 18 percent less.

The figure comes with plenty of caveats. But it also speaks to how the issue of equal pay is at times more complicated than its champions portray. In the Obama White House, for instance, the difference appears to be not that women are routinely paid less than men for the same job -- but paid less because there's not as many women in the highest echelons as there are men.

The records, for instance, show seven women in 2011 making the top salary of \$172,200. Among them is one of Obama's closest confidants, senior adviser Valerie Jarrett. But there were 14 men making the top salary, including adviser David Plouffe who ran the president's 2008 campaign.

The median salary for female employees was \$60,000, compared with \$71,000 for men -- the figures were first reported earlier this year by the Free Beacon. Gender was determined by the name of each employee, so the numbers could be subject to revision.

Neither presidential campaign commented for this story.

But Obama has been on a tear over equal pay since Tuesday's presidential debate, where he touted his decision to make the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act the first bill he signed as president. "This is not just a women's issue, this is a family issue," Obama said.

Within hours of the end of the debate, Obama and his surrogates were hammering that point while mocking the Republican nominee for noting that while as Massachusetts governor he sought "binders full of women" applicants to fill cabinet positions.

"Mitt Romney still won't say whether he'd stand up for equal pay, but he did tell us he has 'binders full of women,'" Obama tweeted the night of the debate.

The campaign pointed out that Romney was not a public supporter of the Lilly Ledbetter bill, which made it easier for women to file fair-pay lawsuits.

Romney said during Tuesday's debate that "I'm going to help women in America get good work by getting a stronger economy and by supporting women in the workforce."

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/10/19/women-in-obama-white-house-earn-less-than-men-amid-equal-pay-debate/>