

EPI *ideas*

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LABOR DAY 2002

EPI economists spotlight economic trends and their impact on working people and their families.

The economic boom of the 1990s helped reduce poverty and raise salaries for disadvantaged workers. But inequalities still persist. Our economists can provide your audience insights into the economic roller coaster – from the benefits of the late '90s boom, to the costs of the lingering downturn.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

In the late 90s Hispanic and black families saw their median income increase, their poverty rates fall to a historic lows, and home ownership climb to historic highs. Single mothers on welfare entered a strong labor market and dramatically reshaped their income.

THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

In spite of these historic gains, close to a third of black children remain in poverty, the wage gap between women and men remains the same as a decade ago, and the number of Hispanic males earning poverty-level wages has actually grown to almost 38%.

The Economic Policy Institute will be releasing its book on workers and the economy, *THE STATE OF WORKING AMERICA 2002-2003*, over Labor Day weekend. The authors, **Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein, and Heather Boushey**, are available to speak on these and other topics that illustrate the findings in the new edition.

To receive EPI press releases via email, please send a request to rsvp@epinet.org.

STRAIGHT TALK FROM EPI

“The good news is women climbed higher on the economic ladder during the strong economy. The bad news is they didn’t close the wage gap with men.”

Heather Boushey

“The tight labor markets of the late 1990s brought the first persistent, broad-based prosperity in decades. But now, with the boom gone bust, American workers are heading back to an economy marred by slow wage growth and no job growth, with wage and income disparities widening once again.”

Lawrence Mishel, president of EPI

“The latter 1990s proved what Martin Luther King preached decades ago: Full employment is a highly effective civil rights tool.”

Jared Bernstein

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The Economic Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank founded in 1986 and located on the web at <http://www.epinet.org>