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What does New York Really Think of Women?

View on Women poll to be published in Times Union and Women@Work magazine

By Leigh Hornbeck, Women@Work Published 5:33 pm, Monday, January 2, 2017

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Eve Waltermaurer, director of research at SUNY New Paltz. The Women@Work View on Women (VOW) poll for New York is an initiative of the Times Union, created through the Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz, where Waltermaurer is director of research, and conducted by Siena College Research Institute.

Eve Waltermaurer had a strong sense that much hasn't changed for women in many arenas – careers, home responsibilities or personal safety – because certain attitudes about women still remain.

So she designed a study to find out exactly what ideas about women linger so we can challenge them.

Women@Work's View on Women (VOW) poll for New York is an initiative of the Times Union, created through the Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz, where Waltermaurer is director of research, and conducted by Siena College Research Institute.

The results of the poll will be shared throughout 2017 in the Times Union, timesunion.com and Women@Work. The data will also serve as the basis for the New York State of Women Summit, being held by Women@Work in the spring which will be aimed at finding ways to address these attitudes about women, particularly as they affect women in the workplace.

Waltermaurer specializes in social and behavioral research, including violence, and found no one ever asked Americans in a single survey or poll questions that would reveal what they think about women's roles in work, politics and leadership, media, education and family. Waltermaurer said she hopes the results will influence the dialogue surrounding views on women. For example, the poll showed 34 percent of men and 27 percent of women believe there is little professional discrimination against women in the workplace.

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BY THE NUMBERS

Percentage of New Yorkers who believe there is little professional discrimination against women in the workplace:

27% Female 34% Male

Believes men are better skilled than women at science and math:

15% Female 23% Male

Believes a mother must put looking after her young child ahead of her career:

56% Female 50% Male

Believes it's a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not want to:

11% Female 18.7% Male

"The perception today is, there are laws and policy in place, so if women aren't making as much money as men, it's their fault," Waltermaurer said.

The online poll was a survey of 1,050 New Yorkers, allowing for diversity of location, race, ethnicity and gender.

In response to the question about whether or not how a woman dresses contributes to her being sexually assaulted or raped, 44 percent of women said yes, as did 58 percent of men. Other responses also revealed a perspective that might seem antiquated in an age of two-earner households, but 56 percent of women said a mother must put looking after her young child ahead of her career, and 50 percent of men agreed.

Believes how a woman dresses contributes to her being sexually assaulted or raped:

44% Female 58% Male

Trusts male experts and sources more than female when reading or watching the news:

10% Female 19% Male

Believes it is not important to make women's access to safe, legal abortions a top government priority:

15% Female 12% Male

Believes it is not important to make reducing discrimination against women of color a top government priority:

4% Female 9% Male

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"I had a strong feeling we haven't seen changes about the treatment of women because we don't feel it's wrong," Waltermaurer said. "How is it not 0 percent when we ask, 'Are men better at science and math than women?'"

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