

## **ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: White House Wants More Women in STEM**

In April, the White House Council on Women and Girls released the report “Keeping America’s Women Moving Forward: The Key to an Economy Built to Last.” The report included statistics that indicate women are underrepresented in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Findings also showed that women were significantly underrepresented in many fast-growing, high-wage fields, such as skilled manufacturing and trades.

The report found that women represent only 25 percent of the STEM workforce, which is expected to grow more than 16 percent by 2020. STEM fields are among the fastest growing sectors in the economy, according to the report. But the low number of women in STEM fields is attributed to fewer women participating in STEM degree programs and women earning STEM degrees but moving on to work in different fields.

Also noted, the wage discrepancy between men and women was 14 percent in STEM careers versus 21 percent in non-STEM fields. Women who hold STEM degrees and work in STEM occupations actually earn 33 percent more than women in non-STEM jobs.

The Obama administration has created the Race to the Top education incentive program to engage girls in STEM education. According to the report, the program has rewarded states that close STEM achievement gaps for girls and minorities by giving them “sole competitive preference” when applying for the grants.