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# ***STRUGGLES OF WOMEN IN LAW***

PRE-LAW SOCIETY AT VCU

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*I am not a lawyer and therefore I don't have any first-hand experience on this subject, but I think it is important to start a conversation on this blog about the struggles women face in the legal workplace. I recognize that other groups such as lawyers of color, disabled attorneys and lawyers in the LGBTQIA+ community also endure hardships and bias, but today I am focusing on female attorneys and the gender bias, discrimination and stereotypes they face.*

*Many people don't realize legal workplaces haven't completely evolved to make the playing field equal for all genders. Women make up more than 50% of the United States population, yet only 37% of lawyers are female. This number has risen over the years, but the legal field has consistently been male-dominated.*

*The first woman admitted to the bar was in 1869, only about 150 years ago. Before this, all lawyers in America were men, which meant all legal workplaces were set up for men to succeed.*

*When women entered the legal profession, they had to compete with men who already had a leg up because they did not face the gender discrimination women did. Even today, women are often in family law, doing appellate work or have second-chair trial careers because it is harder for female attorneys to access positions in other traditionally male-dominated fields.*

*A survey of almost 3000 female lawyers, taken by the American Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession, the ABA, highlights some of the disparities in the workplace. The ABA discovered women are more likely than their male coworkers to be interrupted, to have less access to prime job assignments, to be mistaken for non-lawyers and to do more office housework. Women are also not taken as seriously as men and judged by their appearance before their abilities in the courtroom.*

*Additionally, the gender wage gap, women being paid less than men for doing the same work, is also an issue in the legal field. The ABA found that female attorneys make on average \$467 less per week than male attorneys.*

*Even in legal workplaces today, women have struggles men don't have because of their gender identity. It is important to recognize that while many women are able to succeed as lawyers, there is still a long way to go in order for the legal field to be equal for women.*

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