**'Sizeism' Is Becoming A Weighty Issue For Americans In The Workplace**

*Vivian Giang, March 05, 2012*

Over the past few decades, sizeism in the workplace has increased by 66 percent and it affects women more than men.

Sizeism is the discrimination of people due to their size.

It's "comparable to rates of racial discrimination" in the workplace, says a [study conducted by Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](http://yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/bias/WeightBiasStudy.pdf).

"It results in inequitable hiring practices, prejudice from employers, lower wages, discriminatory action and wrongful termination," Rebecca Puhl, director of research at [Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](http://yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/bias/WeightBiasStudy.pdf), says in the study.

According to [Trust For America's Health,](http://healthyamericans.org/reports/obesity2011/Obesity2011Report.pdf) more than 68 percent of American adults are either overweight or obese, and the common stigma associated with people who battle with their weight is that they're ["lazy, unmotivated, lacking in self-discipline, less competent, noncompliant, and sloppy."](http://yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/bias/WeightBiasStudy.pdf)

For the ones who are able to pass the hiring process, they are sometimes given less desirable positions solely because of their appearance, or receive lower pay than those who aren't considered overweight. The study found that women who were considered a little heavier have salaries approximately 6.2 percent lower than those who weren't, whereas the difference in salary for men is around 2.3 percent.

"The further you are from the societal ideal of beauty, the discrimination you face is exponentially harder," says Sondra Solovay, an attorney and author of "[Tipping the Scales of Justice](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1573927643/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=thebusiinsi-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1573927643)."

Currently, Michigan is the only state that explicitly bars discrimination based on weight, although cities such as Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Calif., Binghamton, N.Y., Urbana, Ill., and Madison, Wis. also legally protect workers from discrimination based on their weight.

In other states, the bias is included under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is enforced by the U.S. [Equal](http://www.businessinsider.com/blackboard/equal) Employment Opportunity Commission, but is not specifically mentioned in the law.

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