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FP-19-07 Median Age at First Marriage: Geographic Variation, 2017

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FP-19-07

Median Age at First Marriage: Geographic Variation, 2017

Krista K. Payne



In this profile, the median age at first marriage is estimated for the nation and each state by gender for 2017 using 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS). Direct estimates of the age at which half of men and women (who in the last year) married for the first time as well as the associated margins of error are provided. The ACS has been collecting data on marriage for nearly a decade.

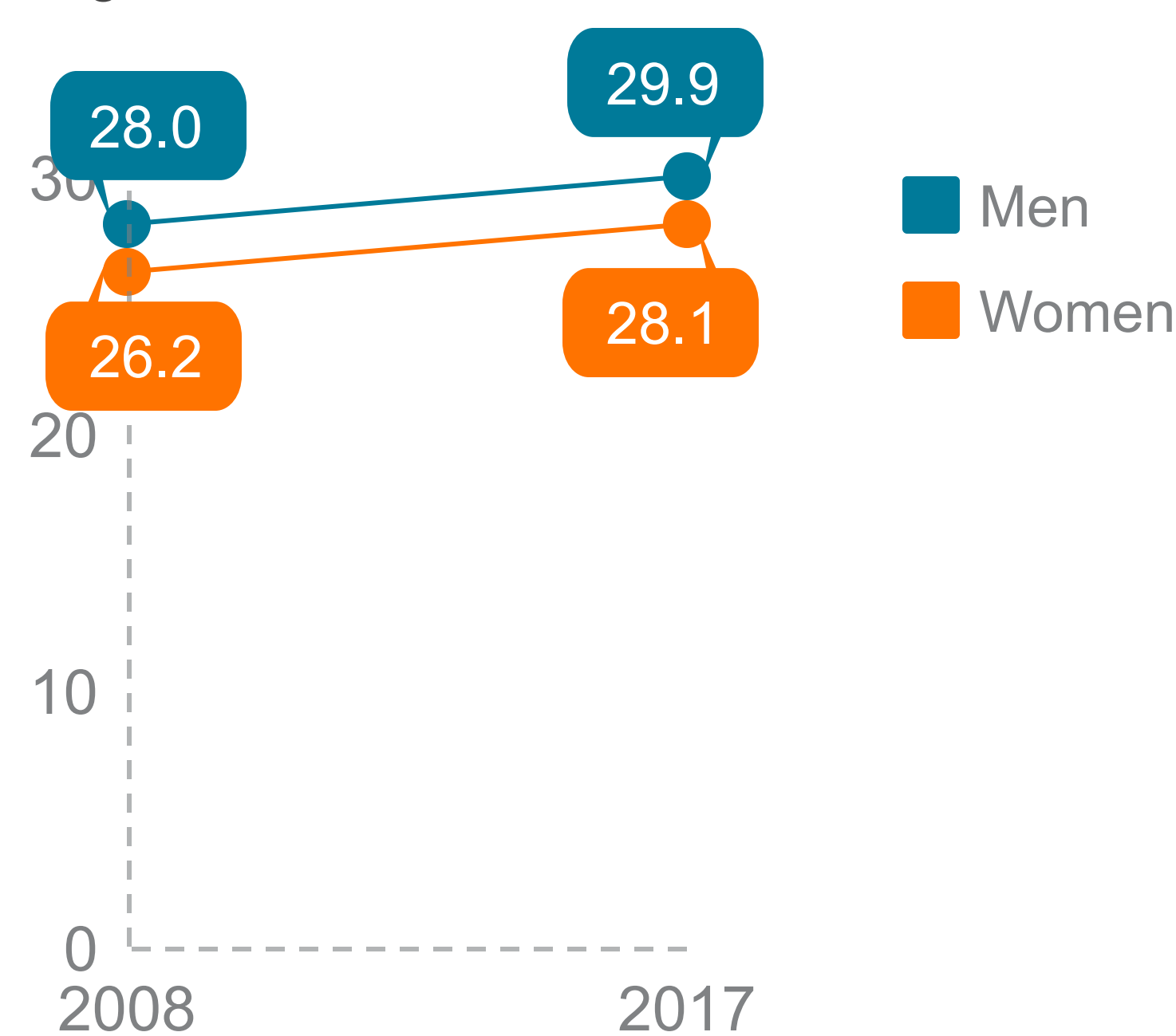
Trend in Median Age at First Marriage by Gender, 2008-2017

- The U.S. median age at first marriage is at a historic highpoint.
- Based on ACS data, since 2008 the age at first marriage has increased by 1.9 years, reaching nearly 30 among men and 28 among women (Figure 1).

States with the Highest and Lowest Age Gaps in Median Age at First Marriage, 2017

- Historically, men marry at later ages than women. The gender gap in the median age at first marriage tends to be about two years (1.8 in both 2008 and 2017).
- However, this gap is not uniform across all states and instead ranges from as high as 3.5 years in Wyoming to as low as .10 years in Hawaii.
 - Hawaii is quite the exception; it is the only state in which the median age at first marriage among women (28.2) is older than that of men (28.1).

Figure 1. Men and Women's Median Age at 1st Marriage, 2008 & 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2008 & 2017

States with the Highest and Lowest Median Age at First Marriage by Gender, 2017

- Men living in New York have the highest median age at first marriage at 31.4 years. Conversely, men in Utah have the youngest median age at first marriage of 26.1.
- Women who live in Washington, D.C. experienced the highest median age at first marriage (30.4), while women living in Utah had the lowest at 24.8.
 - Four states are ranked at the top for oldest ages at first marriage among both men and women —New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Washington D.C. Over the last decade, these states have had the highest ages at first marriage.
 - Four states rank at the bottom with the youngest ages at first marriage for both men and women—Oklahoma, Arkansas, Idaho, and Utah. These states have had the youngest ages at first marriage over the last decade.

Table 1. Median Age at 1st Marriage, 2008: Men's Top & Bottom Five States

Rank	State	Age	MOE
1	New York	31.4	+/- 0.6
2	Massachusetts	31.2	+/- 0.3
3	California	30.9	+/- 0.4
3	Connecticut	30.9	+/- 0.2
5	New Hampshire	30.7	+/- 0.7
5	New Jersey	30.7	+/- 0.3
5	Wash, D.C.	30.7	+/- 0.7
U.S.			
		29.9	+/- 0.2
47	Kentucky	28.0	+/- 0.5
48	Oklahoma	27.5	+/- 0.5
49	Arkansas	27.3	+/- 0.7
50	Idaho	26.7	+/- 1.0
51	Utah	26.1	+/- 0.4

Table 2. Median Age at 1st Marriage, 2008: Women's Top & Bottom Five States

Rank	State	Age	MOE
1	Wash, D.C.	30.4	+/- 0.6
2	Massachusetts	30.1	+/- 0.3
3	Connecticut	29.7	+/- 0.4
3	New York	29.7	+/- 0.2
5	Rhode Island	29.3	+/- 0.7
U.S.			
		28.1	+/- 0.1
47	Oklahoma	25.8	+/- 0.2
48	Arkansas	25.6	+/- 0.4
49	Idaho	25.2	+/- 1.2
50	Wyoming	25.0	+/- 0.6
51	Utah	24.8	+/- 0.3

State Rankings and Geographic Variation in the Median Age at First Marriage by Gender, 2017

The state rankings are divided into quartiles with confidence intervals presented to determine significant differentials.

- Among both men and women, the states in the top quartile are significantly above the national average. The top quartile consists of ages 30.4 and older for men and 28.9 and older for women.
- The states falling in the bottom quartile in 2017 had median ages at marriage of 28.7 or younger for men and 26.9 or younger among women. The median age at marriage in the states in the bottom quartile are significantly below the national average.
- Most states in the Northeastern region of the country had high ages at first marriage (1st quartile). The exceptions include Maine (among men and women) and Vermont (among women).
- For men and women, most Midwestern & Southern states exhibited ages at first marriage in the bottom two quartiles. Similarly, the median age at first marriage among women living in Western states are mostly found in the bottom two quartiles.

Figure 4. Men's State-level Median Age at First Marriage by Quartile, 2017

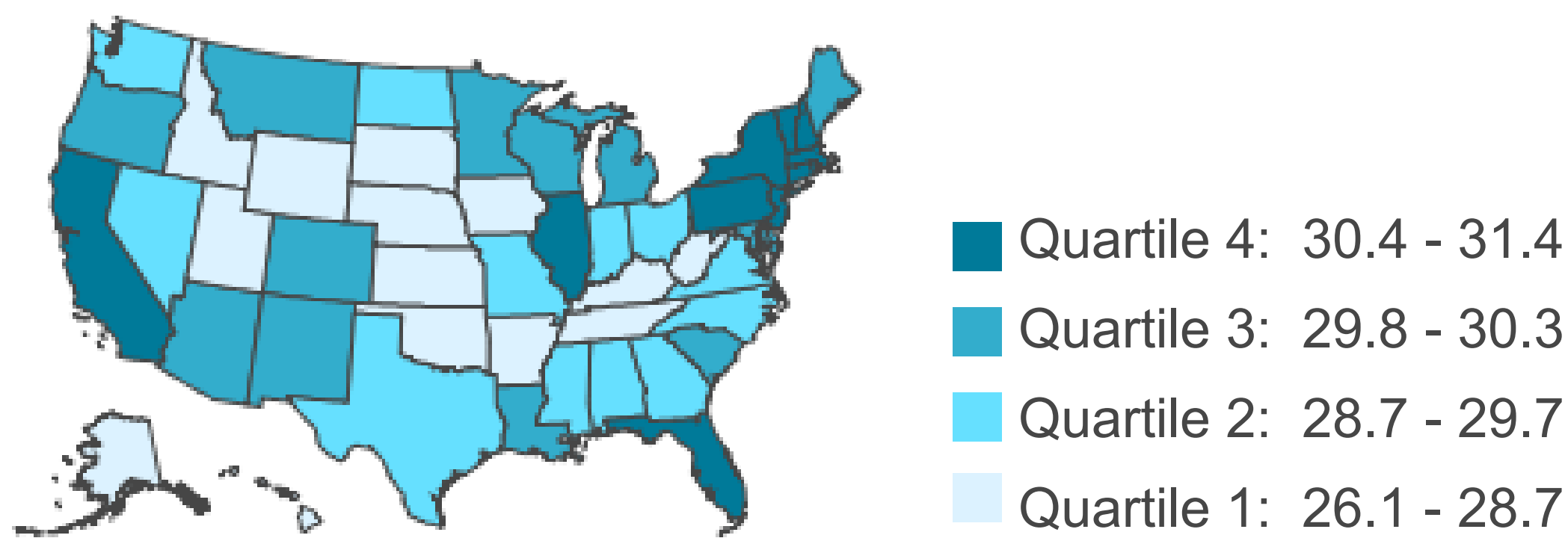
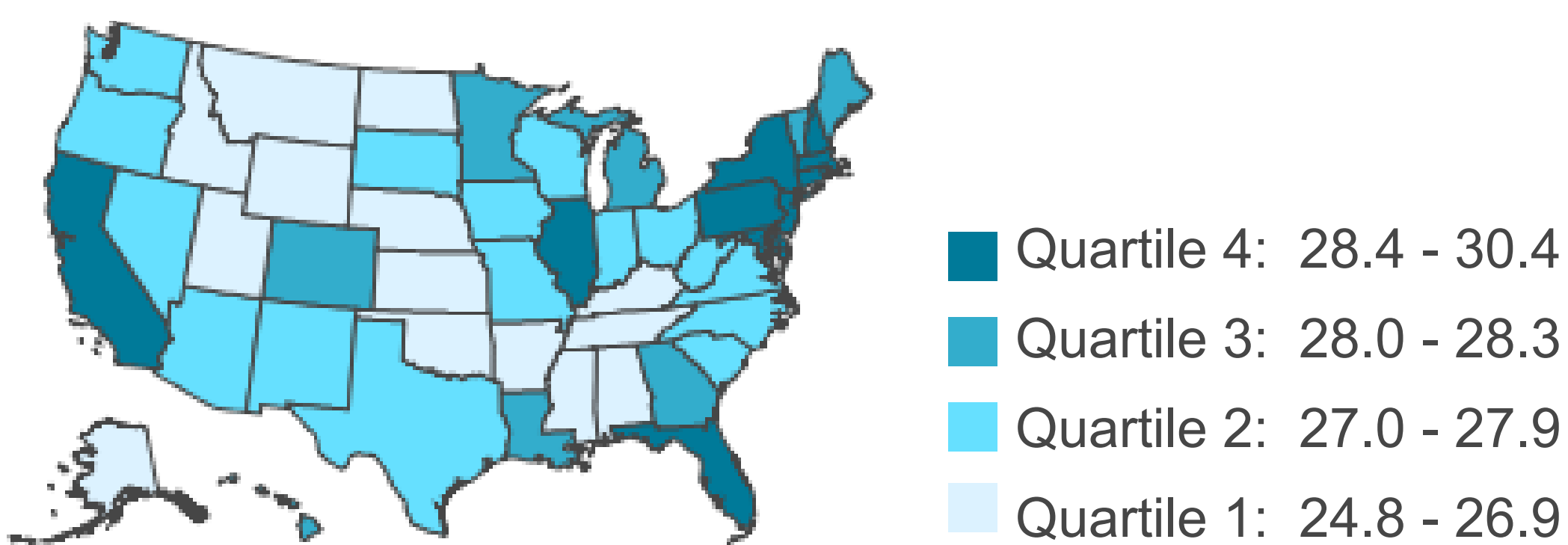


Figure 5. Women's State-level Median Age at First Marriage by Quartile, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr est.

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Figure 2. Men's State-level Median Age at First Marriage by Quartile, 2017

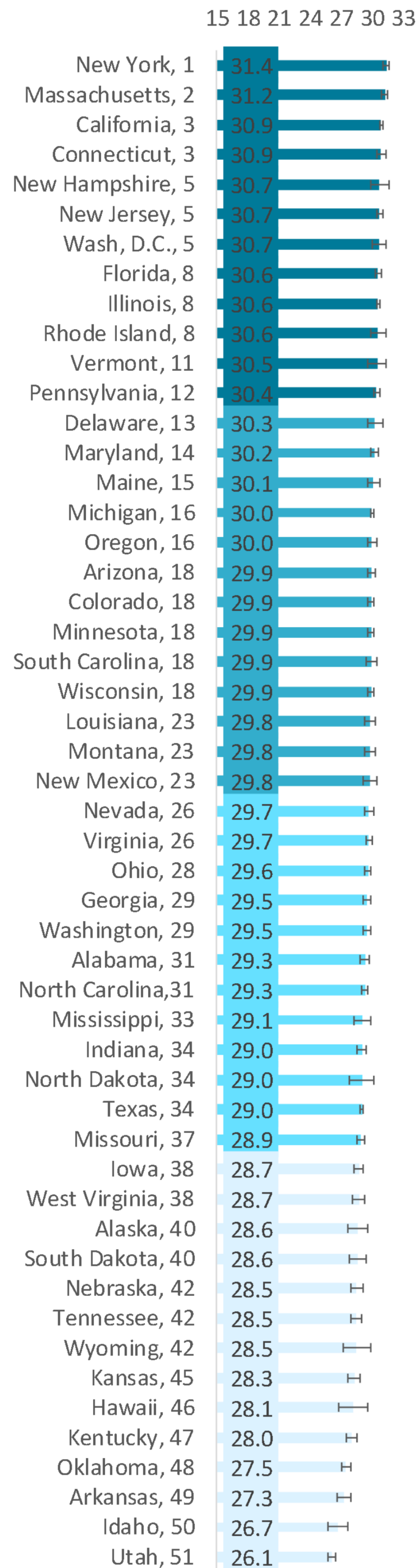


Figure 3. Women's State-level Median Age at First Marriage by Quartile, 2017

