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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 6985 of April 10, 1997

The President

National Pay Inequity Awareness Day, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

## A Proclamation

Although more than three decades have passed since the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act were signed into law, women working full-time and year round in the United States, on average, still earn only 71 percent of the wages earned by men. This means that, for the 1996 calendar year, the wages of the average American female worker will not match those of the average male worker until April 11 of this year.

Although the pay gap has narrowed over the past two decades, unfair pay practices persist in many U.S. business sectors. Paying a woman less than a male co-worker with equal skills and job responsibilities hurts that woman and her family—not only in immediate material benefit, but also in her ability to invest and save for retirement. Working women deserve—and are demanding—fair and equal pay for their time spent on the job. Over a quarter of a million women surveyed by the Department of Labor indicated that “improving pay scales” is one of their highest priorities in bringing fairness to the workplace.

To address this problem, my Administration has moved on several fronts simultaneously: I signed the increase in the minimum wage into law, initiated a pension education campaign, strengthened equal employment law enforcement, and created a Women’s Bureau Fair Pay Clearinghouse at the Department of Labor, which disseminates information on working women’s wages and occupations and on organizations that are active in improving women’s wages. In addition, my Administration, with over 200 private-sector partners, has formed the American Savings Education Council to educate women and men on how they can ensure their financial independence in retirement. Together with renewed attention focused on the reality of pay inequity and what it means for working women across the country, these initiatives create real opportunities for employers, working women, and organizations to develop new and effective approaches that achieve pay equity.

Strong enforcement of equal employment laws also plays a critical role in resolving unfair pay. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces laws that make it illegal to discriminate in wages, or to limit or segregate job applicants or employees in any way that would deprive them of opportunities because of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, or disability.

The Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs enforces nondiscrimination and affirmative action laws that apply to employers that do business with the Federal Government, ensuring that Government contractors prevent and remedy discrimination and resolve matters of pay equity.

It is vital that we aggressively enforce our pay equity laws. Women deserve to be rewarded on an equal basis for their contributions to the American work force.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 11,

1997, as National Pay Inequity Awareness Day. I call upon Government officials, law enforcement agencies, business and industry leaders, educators, and all the people of the United States to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.



[FR Doc. 97-9893

Filed 4-14-97; 8:45 am]

Billing code 3195-01-P