
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7077 of April 2, 1998

The President

National Equal Pay Day, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans have always believed in the value of work and that, if you work hard, you should be able to provide for yourself and your family with dignity. Today, with more jobs, low unemployment, and real wages rising, America's workers are prospering. Yet, there are many women in the workforce whose work is not being fully valued.

This year, National Equal Pay Day falls on April 3, the day on which the typical woman's 1998 earnings, when added to her 1997 wages, will finally equal what the typical man earned in 1997 alone. In other words, the typical woman who works full-time earns just 74 cents for each dollar that the typical man earns. For women of color, the wage gap is even wider—African American women earn only 63 cents for each dollar earned by white men, and Hispanic women earn only 53 cents. While women now hold almost half of all executive and managerial jobs, their wages are only 70 percent of the average pay of their male counterparts. And, according to the Department of Labor's Glass Ceiling Commission report, women in management jobs generally remain at entry-level and mid-level positions. In part, these differences in treatment exist because of differing levels of experience, education, and skill. But study after study shows that, even after legitimate differences are accounted for, a significant pay gap still persists between men and women in similar jobs.

Equal pay not only treats women fairly, it benefits us all—particularly our Nation's families. It empowers women to become more self-sufficient, reducing the dependence of many families on government assistance. It also raises women's purchasing power, increases their pensions, and improves their capacity to save, all of which help to strengthen our economy.

During the past three decades, our Nation has made a strong commitment to ensuring that every American is treated with dignity and equality in the workplace. Legislation such as the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act has helped us make progress in correcting discriminatory practices. But we still have a long way to go before the wage gap between men and women is eliminated. This year, I proposed an additional \$43 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Department of Labor in order to strengthen enforcement of the laws that prohibit discrimination, including wage discrimination; to encourage mediation; and to help the EEOC reduce the average time it takes to resolve private sector complaints. This additional funding will help all victims of discrimination, including wage discrimination, obtain relief in a more timely manner. And the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor will continue to make resources available through the Fair Pay Clearinghouse to highlight model pay practices and educate employers about the practical benefits of assuring equal pay for their employees.

As we observe National Equal Pay Day, I urge businesses and State and local governments across our Nation to make a solemn commitment to recognize the value of women's contributions to the workplace and to reward them appropriately. By doing so, we will help provide opportunity and promote equality and justice for all.

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 3, 1998, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon Government officials, law enforcement agencies, business leaders, educators, and the American people to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force. I urge all employers to review their wage practices and to ensure that all their employees, including women, are paid equitably for their work.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".

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