
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7017 of August 19, 1997

The President

Women's Equality Day, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, on Women's Equality Day, we reflect on how far we have traveled on our journey to make America live up to the ideals of justice and equality articulated so powerfully in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Few constitutional amendments have affected that progress more profoundly than the 19th, which guarantees American women the right to vote.

Looking back from today's vantage point, where women hold positions of authority and responsibility at almost every level of government, it is hard to imagine that, for almost a century and a half, women were barred from exercising the most fundamental right of every democracy. There are women still living among us who can remember a time when they were prevented, by law, from having a role in shaping the destiny of their country and the impact of government on their own and their families' lives. But thanks to women and men of extraordinary courage and conviction, who waged for years a determined campaign for women's suffrage, the 19th Amendment was ratified in August of 1920 and opened the door for generations of American women to add their vision and voices to our national discourse.

This year, we mark another milestone in the life of our democracy: the 25th anniversary of the enactment of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX, building on the spirit of the 19th Amendment, prohibits discrimination against women in education and sports programs. For a quarter-century, it has enabled American girls and women to make the most of their abilities, to dream big dreams, and, more important, to achieve those dreams. In large measure, because of the 19th Amendment and Title IX, our Nation has reaped the rewards of women's talents, accomplishments, wisdom, and perspective. In every activity and profession, in the home and outside—as astronauts and professional athletes, as teachers and university presidents, as farmers and firefighters, as caregivers, Cabinet members, and Supreme Court Justices—women have made lasting contributions to the quality of our lives and the strength of our democracy.

Today, as Americans engage in a serious and profoundly important dialogue on the future of our multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural society, we do well to remember that we are all immeasurably enriched when we choose the path of inclusion and empowerment. Women's Equality Day and the anniversary of Title IX remind us that by demanding an equal opportunity for every American, we ensure a brighter future for all Americans.

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, do hereby proclaim August 26, 1997, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the citizens of our great Nation to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of August, 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-second.

William Clinton

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