
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7179 of April 7, 1999

The President

National Equal Pay Day, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

We live in a time of remarkable promise. Our Nation's economy is the strongest we have experienced in a generation, creating more than 18 million new jobs since 1993 and the fastest growth in real wages in more than two decades. American women have contributed greatly to this record of success; unfortunately, they have not enjoyed an equal share in the prosperity they have helped to create.

The typical woman who works full-time year-round earns approximately 75 cents for every dollar the typical man earns. An African American woman earns just 65 cents and a Hispanic woman earns 55 cents for each dollar that a white man earns. In the course of a week, this pay gap can mean one less bag of groceries, skipping a trip to the doctor, missing a rent payment, or not being able to pay for day care. Over the course of a working lifetime, it can mean thousands of dollars, a smaller pension, and fewer savings to provide for a comfortable retirement. And when a working woman is denied equal pay, it doesn't just hurt her; it also hurts her family. In more than 10 million American households today, the mother is the only breadwinner.

Americans have always believed in justice and equality. We have always believed that those who work hard should be able to provide a decent living for themselves and their children. If we are to live up to those ideals, we must ensure that women do not suffer wage discrimination. We must continue vigorous enforcement of existing laws, such as the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, so that no employer undervalues or underpays the work performed by women. To strengthen Department of Labor and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission efforts to end wage discrimination and expand opportunities in the workplace for women, my Administration has included a \$14 million Equal Pay Initiative in my proposed balanced budget for fiscal year 2000. This initiative will provide more resources to identify wage discrimination, to educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities, and to bring more women into better-paying jobs. We will also work with the Congress to pass the proposed Paycheck Fairness Act—legislation designed to strengthen laws that prohibit wage discrimination.

As we observe National Equal Pay Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to justice and equality in the workplace, and let us build a Nation for the 21st century where the talents, efforts, and hard work of American women will be rightly appreciated and fairly rewarded.

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 8, 1999, 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 are paid equitably for their work.

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

William Clinton

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