

Wage inequality undermines the promise of fairness and opportunity upon which our country was founded. For families trying to make ends meet, that gap can also mean the difference between falling behind and getting ahead. When working mothers make less than their male counterparts, they have less to spend on basic necessities like child care, groceries, and rent. Small businesses see fewer customers walk through their doors. Tuition payments get harder to afford, and rungs on the ladder of opportunity get farther apart. And just as diminished wages shortchange families, they slow our entire economy—weakening growth here at home and eroding American competitiveness abroad.

To grow our middle class and spur progress in the years ahead, we need to address longstanding inequity that keeps women from earning a living equal to their efforts. That is why I have made pay equity a top priority—from signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act days after I took office to cracking down on equal pay law violations wherever they occur. And to back our belief in equality with the weight of law, I continue to call on the Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Our country has come a long way toward ensuring everyone gets a fair shot at opportunity, no matter who you are or where you come from. But our journey will not be complete until our mothers, our wives, our sisters, and our daughters are treated equally in the workplace and always see an honest day's work rewarded with honest wages. Today, let us renew that vision for ourselves and for our children, and let us rededicate ourselves to realizing it in the days ahead.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2013, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon all Americans to recognize the full value of women's skills and their significant contributions to the labor force, acknowledge the injustice of wage inequality, and join efforts to achieve equal pay.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8956 of April 8, 2013

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2013

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

From the days of the Revolutionary War to the trials of our times, America has been blessed with an unbroken chain of patriots who have always stepped forward to serve. Whenever our country has come under attack, our men and women in uniform have risen to its defense. And whenever our freedoms have been threatened, they have responded with unyielding resolve—sometimes trading their liberty to secure our own.

Today, we pay tribute to former prisoners of war who made that profound sacrifice. Caught behind enemy lines and stripped of their rights, these service members endured trials few of us can imagine. Many lost their lives. But in reflecting on the tragic price they paid, we also remember how their courage lit up even the darkest night. Where others might have given up or broken down, they dug in. They summoned an iron will. In their strength, we see the measure of their character; in their sacrifice, we see the spirit of a Nation.

As we express our gratitude to heroes who gave so much for their country, we remain mindful that no one gesture is enough to truly honor their service. For that, we must recommit to serving our veterans as well as they served us—not just today, but every day. We must pursue a full accounting of those who are still missing. And for service members who have come home, we must never stop fighting to give them the stability and the support they have earned. That is the promise we renew today—for former prisoners of war, for their families, and for every American who has sworn an oath to protect and defend.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2013, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day of remembrance by honoring all American prisoners of war, our service members, and our veterans. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8957 of April 12, 2013

Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2013

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

One hundred and twenty-three years ago, countries across the Western Hemisphere came together to found the International Union of American Republics—a forerunner to the Organization of American States and a foundation for progress throughout the region. In the decades since, nations in the Americas have forged lasting partnerships in trade, security, and democracy that reflect our shared commitment to peace and prosperity. As we celebrate those ties this week, we recognize the Pan American community's accomplishments and recommit to advancing common goals.

Delivering prosperity for all our people takes strong, broad-based economic growth. That is why my Administration has worked tirelessly to boost trade with our partners abroad and open new markets for American products. We