

PROCLAMATION 4236

Women's Equality Day

August 16, 1973*By the President of the United States of America*

A Proclamation

1. USC prec. title

Fifty-three years ago, on August 26, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was certified as part of our Constitution, assuring that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

The struggle for women's suffrage, however, was only the first step toward full and equal participation of women in our Nation's life. In recent years, we have made other giant strides by attacking sex discrimination through our laws and by paving new avenues to equal economic opportunity for women. Today, in virtually every sector of our society, women are making important contributions to the quality of American life.

And yet, much still remains to be done. American women, though they represent a majority of our population, still suffer from myriad forms of discrimination.

In the pursuit of equal rights for women, the Federal Government must take the lead and set the example. As I reminded the heads of executive departments and agencies in 1971, American women represent an important reservoir of ability and dedication which Government must draw upon to a greater degree. I therefore directed at that time that the Government demonstrate its recognition of the equality of women by making greater use of their skills.

86 Stat. 103.
42 USC 2000e
note.

Last year, with the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, a strong new statutory base was provided for furthering equal opportunity for women in the Federal Government. With the help of this new tool, Federal agencies are now carrying out affirmative action plans to guarantee full opportunity for the advancement of women in accordance with their abilities. During the past two years, the number

of women in the middle and higher grade levels of Government employment has significantly increased. And we are determined to do better still.

While we are making great strides to eliminate outright job discrimination because of sex in the Federal Government, we must recognize that people's attitudes cannot be changed by laws alone. There still exist elusive prejudices born of mores and customs that stand in the way of progress for women. We must do all that we can to overcome these barriers against what is fair and right.

Because I firmly believe that women should not be denied equal protection of the laws of this Nation and equal opportunity to participate fully in our national life, I reaffirm again my support for the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment can represent a giant step forward in achieving full equality of opportunity for all Americans as we approach the 200th birthday of our Nation. I hope it will be speedily ratified.

86 Stat. 1523.

The Congress has, by House Joint Resolution 52, 93rd Congress, designated August 26, 1973, as Women's Equality Day, and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in commemoration of that day in 1920 on which women of America were first guaranteed the right to vote.

Ante, p. 350.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD NIXON, President of the United States of America, do hereby call upon the people of the United States and interested groups and organizations to observe August 26, 1973, as Women's Equality Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I further urge all our people to use this occasion to reflect on the importance of achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and to dedicate themselves anew to that great goal. For the cause of equal rights and opportunities for women is inseparable from the cause of human dignity and equal justice for all.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninety-eighth.

