

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8402 of August 25, 2009

Women's Equality Day, 2009

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today, our country renews its commitment to freedom and justice for all our citizens. As we prepare to celebrate this women's day of equality, we reflect on the sacrifices once made to allow women and girls the basic rights and choices we freely exercise today. The future we leave to our daughters and granddaughters will be determined by our willingness to build on the achievements of our past and move forward as one people and one Nation. The fight for women's equality is not a woman's agenda, but an American agenda.

We honor the resilience, accomplishments, and history of all women in the United States. We celebrate the courageous women who fought to uphold a fundamental principle within our Constitution—the right to vote—and in so doing, protected the cornerstone of our vibrant democracy. These visionaries of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 sought to ensure that our country lived up to its founding ideals. Although only one, Charlotte Woodward, at the age of 81, had the opportunity to exercise her newfound right, the struggle reminds us that no righteous cause is a lost one. We also commemorate women like Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a poet and lecturer who formed the National Association of Colored Women; Antonia Pantoja, a tireless advocate of education equality within the Latino community; Sarah Winnemucca, a voice for peace within the Native American community; and Patsy Mink, author of Title IX and the first woman of color and Asian American woman elected to the United States Congress. These women's talents, and the contributions of countless others, built upon the framework of 1848 and forged paths for future generations.

Our Nation has come a long way since that ground-breaking convention in New York. Women have occupied some of the most significant positions in government. They have delivered justice from the bench of our highest court, fought for our country in foreign lands, discovered cures to diseases, and joined the ranks of the greatest business leaders of our time. Female college graduates now outnumber their male counterparts. Women have sought equality through government, demonstrated by the signing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, and the establishment of the White House Council on Women and Girls. They have sought equality through advocacy, exemplified by the efforts of thousands of women's organizations. America has made significant progress toward becoming the fair and just society the suffragists once envisioned.

Yet, today, our work remains unfinished. Far too many adult women remain mired in poverty. Women are still subject to pervasive discrimination

at school and harassing conduct in the workplace. Women make, on average, only 78 cents for every dollar paid to men. Underrepresented in many facets of our economic and public life, from government to boardrooms to the sciences, women have yet to eradicate all barriers to professional development.

We stand at a moment of unparalleled change and a time for reflection and hope. We cannot allow the vibrant energy and passionate commitment of our trailblazing women to fade, and we can never forget the responsibility we bear to the ideals of liberty and equality for all. Each generation of successful women serves as a catalyst to empower, enlighten, and educate the next generation of girls and boys, and we must devote ourselves to promoting this catalyst for change now and in the future.

On this Women's Equality Day, we resolve to continue the important work of our Nation's foremothers and their successors, and turn their vision of a more equal America into our reality.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, 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, 2009, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate the achievements of women and recommit themselves to the goal of true gender equality in this country.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8403 of August 26, 2009

Death of Senator Edward M. Kennedy

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

Senator Edward M. Kennedy was not only one of the greatest senators of our time, but one of the most accomplished Americans ever to serve our democracy. Over the past half-century, nearly every major piece of legislation that has advanced the civil rights, health, and economic well-being of the American people bore his name and resulted from his efforts. With his passing, an important chapter in our American story has come to an end.

As a mark of respect for the memory of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset on August 30, 2009. I also direct that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff until sunset on the day of his interment. I further direct that the flag