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Proclamation 6883—National Pay Inequity Awareness Day, 1996

April 11, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than three decades after the passage of the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, women and people of color continue to suffer the consequences of unfair pay differentials. In comparing median weekly earnings, last year American women earned only 75 cents for every dollar a man brought home, with African American women and Hispanic women collecting just 66 cents and 57 cents, respectively. Significant wage gaps exist for African American and Hispanic men, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans as well.

April 11 is the day on which American women's wages for 1996, when added to their entire 1995 earnings, finally equal what men earned in 1995 alone. Unfair pay practices exist at all education levels and in every occupation. Last year, women physicians and lawyers earned substantially less than their male counterparts. The problem is particularly acute in female-dominated professions and in jobs where minority groups are disproportionately represented. Though changing technologies and a growing demand for services have made their positions increasingly vital, America's child care providers, secretaries, textile workers, telephone operators, social workers, and maintenance people are among those who bear the greatest wage discrepancies.

Ensuring fair pay is an essential part of helping women and their families become and remain self-sufficient. According to 1993 data, the vast majority of households depend on the wages of a working mother, and 12 percent of all families are supported by a woman working as the single head of household. Studies show that salary inequities often force women to turn to public assistance to keep a roof over their children's heads and food on the table.

Fair pay equity policies can be implemented simply and without incurring undue costs. Twenty States have already established programs aimed at increasing the wages of employees in female-dominated jobs, and many private sector businesses have implemented voluntary policies. These employers understand that fair pay is an invaluable human resource management tool that helps attract and retain the best workers.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, the United States joined more than 180 other countries to address problems facing women and to promote workers' basic rights. This was an important step, and we must build on it to further the dialogue about fair pay and treatment in this country. Women and minority workers have long fueled our Nation's progress, and we must do all we can to recognize their achievements and to leave a legacy of equality and justice for their children to cherish.

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 April 11, 1996, as National Pay Inequity Awareness Day. I call upon Government officials, law enforcement agencies, business and industry leaders, educators, and all the people of the United States to recognize the full value of women's skills and contributions to the labor force. I urge all employers to review their wage-setting practices and to see that their employees, particularly women and people of color, are paid fairly for their work.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:15 a.m., April 12, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.

Proclamation 6884—Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 1996

April 11, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today, the nations of the Western Hemisphere share a greater commitment to peace and democracy than they have at any other time in history. This consensus has at its core the ideas that liberalized markets work, that democracy is the foremost means of protecting individual human rights, that free trade is the best mechanism to promote growth, and that all of these principles combine to offer hope for improving people's lives. The interdependence of our many countries ensures our united efforts toward these common goals.

We have seen remarkable success from hemispheric cooperation in recent years—from migration issues, to counter-narcotics measures, to promoting trade. This cooperative spirit energized the Summit of the Americas in 1994, where representatives from 34 democratically-elected governments committed themselves to democratic principles, effective governance, sustainable economic growth, and a cleaner global environment. This historic gathering recognized that peace and economic prosperity in any one country are contingent on the health of its neighbors.

We can also take pride in our hemisphere's abilities to address the challenges of our rapidly changing world. The Mexican financial crisis that shook markets last year was contained and reversed because of U.S.-led international support and the region's governments' redoubled commitment to economic reform. Similarly, the progress toward resolving the border dispute between Peru and Ecuador demonstrated the dedication of the Guarantors of the Rio Protocol and others to keeping our hemisphere on a steady course. Nevertheless, recent violations of international law and human rights are sad reminders that one country continues to refuse to join our family of democratic nations.

As we approach the next century, let us celebrate our achievements and maintain high expectations for the continued progress of our hemispheric partnerships. In doing so, we can ensure that the Americas will continue to prosper, integrate, and solve problems in a cooperative, mutually beneficial manner.

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 April 14, 1996, as Pan American Day and April 14 through April 20, 1996, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of all other areas under the flag of the United States to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 12, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 16.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Civil War in Liberia

April 11, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On April 4, 1996, small arms and mortar fire broke out in Monrovia, Liberia, apparently as the result of renewed fighting between factions led by Charles Taylor and Roosevelt Johnson involved in the civil war in that country. On April 5, groups of angry civilians set up make-shift checkpoints near the international airport and within the city to protest the destruction of their property by the warring factions. On April 6, the American Embassy began receiving calls from American citizens reporting weapons