

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 11, 2009

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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ESTABLISHING A WHITE HOUSE COUNCIL ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby order as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Over the past generation, our society has made tremendous progress in eradicating barriers to women's success. A record number of women are attending college and graduate school. Women make up a growing share of our workforce, and more women are corporate executives and business owners than ever before, helping boost the U.S. economy and foster U.S. competitiveness around the world. Today, women are serving at the highest levels of all branches of our Government.

Despite this progress, certain inequalities continue to persist. On average, American women continue to earn only about 78 cents for every dollar men make, and women are still significantly underrepresented in the science, engineering, and technology fields. Far too many women lack health insurance, and many are unable to take time off to care for a new baby or an ailing family member. Violence against women and girls remains a global epidemic. The challenge of ensuring equal educational opportunities for women and girls endures. As the current economic crisis has swept across our Nation, women have been seriously affected.

These issues do not concern just women. When jobs do not offer family leave, that affects men who wish to help care for their families. When women earn less than men for the same work, that affects families who have to work harder to make ends meet. When our daughters do not have the same educational and career opportunities as our sons, that affects entire communities, our economy, and our future as a Nation.

The purpose of this order is to establish a coordinated Federal response to issues that particularly impact the lives of women and girls and to ensure that Federal programs and policies address and take into account the distinctive concerns of women and girls, including women of color and those with disabilities.

Sec. 2. White House Council on Women and Girls. There is established within the Executive Office of the President a White House Council on Women and Girls (Council).

(a) Membership of the Council. The Council shall consist of the following members:

(1) the Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison, who shall serve as Chair of the Council;

(2) the Secretary of State;

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- (3) the Secretary of the Treasury;
- (4) the Secretary of Defense;
- (5) the Attorney General;
- (6) the Secretary of the Interior;
- (7) the Secretary of Agriculture;
- (8) the Secretary of Commerce;
- (9) the Secretary of Labor;
- (10) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- (11) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;
- (12) the Secretary of Transportation;
- (13) the Secretary of Energy;
- (14) the Secretary of Education;
- (15) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;
- (16) the Secretary of Homeland Security;
- (17) the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations;
- (18) the United States Trade Representative;
- (19) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget;
- (20) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency;
- (21) the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers;
- (22) the Director of the Office of Personnel Management;
- (23) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration;
- (24) the Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council;
- (25) the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy and Director of the National Economic Council; and
- (26) the heads of such other executive branch departments, agencies, and offices as the President may, from time to time, designate.

A member of the Council may designate, to perform the Council functions of the member, a senior-level official who is a part of the member's department, agency, or office, and who is a full-time officer or employee of the Federal Government. At the direction of the Chair, the Council may establish subgroups consisting exclusively of Council members or their designees under this section, as appropriate.

(b) Administration of the Council. The Department of Commerce shall provide funding and administrative support for the Council to the extent permitted by law and within existing appropriations. The Chair shall convene regular meetings of the Council, determine its agenda, and direct its work. The Chair shall designate an Executive Director of the Council, who shall coordinate the work of the Council and head any staff assigned to the Council.

Sec. 3. Mission and Functions of the Council. The Council shall work across executive departments and agencies to provide a coordinated Federal response to issues that have a distinct impact on the lives of women and girls, including assisting women-owned businesses to compete internationally and working to increase the participation of women in the science, engineering, and technology workforce, and to ensure that Federal programs and policies adequately take those impacts into account. The Council shall be responsible for providing recommendations to the President on the effects of pending legislation and executive branch policy proposals; for suggesting changes to Federal programs or policies to address issues of special importance to women and girls; for reviewing and recommending changes to policies that have a distinct impact on women in the Federal workforce; and for assisting in the development of legislative and policy proposals of special importance to women and girls. The functions of the Council are advisory only.

Sec. 4. Outreach. Consistent with the objectives set out in this order, the Council, in accordance with applicable law, in addition to regular meetings, shall conduct outreach with representatives of nonprofit organizations, State and local government agencies, elected officials, and other interested persons that will assist with the Council's development of a detailed set of recommendations.

Sec. 5. Federal Interagency Plan. The Council shall, within 150 days of the date of this order, develop and submit to the President a Federal interagency plan with recommendations for interagency action consistent with the goals of this order. The Federal interagency plan shall include an assessment by each member executive department, agency, or office of the status and scope of its efforts to further the progress and advancement of women and girls. Such an assessment shall include a report on the status of any offices or programs that have been created to develop, implement, or monitor targeted initiatives concerning women or girls. The Federal interagency plan shall also include recommendations for issues, programs, or initiatives that should be further evaluated or studied by the Council. The Council shall review and update the Federal interagency plan periodically, as appropriate, and shall present to the President any updated recommendations or findings.

Sec. 6. General Provisions. (a) The heads of executive departments and agencies shall assist and provide information to the Council, consistent with applicable law, as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Council. Each executive department and agency shall bear its own expense for participating in the Council.

(b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or

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(ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(d) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
March 11, 2009.

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