

**CULTURAL  
AWARENESS**

**OBSERVANCE**



**Women's Equality Day  
Information Base**

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AUGUST

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*Women's Equality Day*  
People

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*Photo by: Lance Cpl. Ashley Phillips, 11 MAR 2017*

Temple Grandin, Ph.D., is now the most accomplished and widely-known adult with autism in the world. She has become a successful author and speaker on the subject of autism because of her insight, and cultivated a career as one of the few livestock-handling equipment designers in the world. She explains that her ability to empathize with the animals raised for the meat and dairy industry helps her to envision the best practices for their humane treatment. In her lifetime thus far, she has designed the facilities that handle nearly half the cattle in the United States, consulting for huge corporations like McDonald's and Burger King. Photo from templegrandin.com.



<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5488844>

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Harriet Tubman is the most well-known conductor of the Underground Railroad, risking her life many times to save over 300 men, women, and children escape slavery in the South. In April of 2016, the US Treasury announced that a new design for the \$20 bill would feature the heroic figure on the front. The design is set to begin circulation in 2020 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and women's suffrage.

*<http://www.harriet-tubman.org/20-dollar-bill/>*

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When Jeannie Flynn finished pilot training at the top of her class in 1992, she was told she would be given her first choice of aircraft. She soon discovered that her first choice—the F-15 Strike Eagle—was not an option for female pilots at the time, along with a lengthy list of similar fighter and bomber aircraft.

*<http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/581654/af-first-female-fighter-pilot-continues-to-break-stereotypes.aspx>*

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During the Persian Gulf War, Congress repealed laws banning women from flying combat missions and serving on combat ships. In 1994, First Lieutenant Jeannie Flynn became the first female fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

*[http://www.ctie.monash.edu/hargrave/flynn\\_j.html](http://www.ctie.monash.edu/hargrave/flynn_j.html)*

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Jeannie Leavitt—now married—became the nation's first female fighter pilot, and in 2012, its first female fighter wing commander when she assumed command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina.

*<http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/581654/af-first-female-fighter-pilot-continues-to-break-stereotypes.aspx>*

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After graduating from nursing school in 1928, Florence Guinness Blake went on to Teachers College at Columbia University to prepare to teach pediatric nursing. Her passion for improving the care of children led her to Union Medical College in Peiping, China, where she taught pediatric nursing for three years. Throughout her life, she continued to champion advancements and education on the topic of pediatrics, and was frequently consulted by national organizations concerned with child care.

*<http://www.nursingworld.org/FlorenceGuinnessBlake>*

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Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel, better known as Coco Chanel, was a French modernist designer whose early twentieth-century designs revolutionized women's clothing. In a time when women were beginning to gain some headway in the fight for equality, Chanel threw the constrictive bondage of the corset out the window and introduced trousers, jackets, and loose, flowy dresses designed for comfort and free movement. Today, the Chanel brand remains a classic genius in the world of fashion.

*<http://www.biographyonline.net/artists/coco-chanel.html>*

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After attending the New York School of Nursing, Lillian Wald founded the Henry Street Settlement on the Lower East Side of New York City. In 1893, she witnessed first-hand the poverty and hardship endured by the immigrants in the area. Soon after, Wald moved into the neighborhood, and with the help of a few colleagues, offered health care to its residents on a sliding fee scale. Her tireless humanitarian work continued throughout her life and legacy, as well as her staunch advocacy for children, labor, immigrant, civil, and women's rights. *<http://www.henrystreet.org/about/history/lillian-wald.html>*



Lillian Wald in a nurse's uniform, 1893. Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Google Images.

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Lilly Ledbetter was a manager at a Goodyear tire factory in Alabama where she worked for almost 20 years. She did not know her pay was significantly less than her male counterparts until receiving an anonymous note listing the salaries of three male managers. She filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was awarded \$3.3 million, but the decision was reversed because the complaint had been filed too long after the original discriminatory pay decision.

<http://www.nwlc.org/resource/lilly-ledbetter-fair-pay-act-0>

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In 1993, J.K. Rowling was a single mother, living in a small Edinburgh apartment and surviving on state benefits while finishing her first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. After being rejected by 12 major publishers, a small press offered to publish the book and agreed to pay her a small advance. Within a few weeks of publishing, Rowling's storytelling talent would become the epicenter of an immense fictional world, beloved by millions. Today, the Harry Potter series represents a billion dollar brand – spanning seven novels, eight films, an amusement park, and children's toys.

[http://www.biographyonline.net/writers/j\\_k\\_rowling.html](http://www.biographyonline.net/writers/j_k_rowling.html)

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In 1935, Mary McLeod Bethune organized the National Council of Negro Women. The coalition lobbied against job discrimination, racism, and sexism. The goal was to use the council's collective power on issues affecting women, their families, and their communities.

<http://www.ncnw.org/history/>

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Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb was the first U.S. woman to undergo astronaut testing in 1953. However, just 10 years later, NASA canceled the women's program, and it wasn't until 1983 that an American woman was sent to space.

<http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/cobb.html>

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In 1968, Shirley Chisolm became the first African-American congresswoman, beginning the first of seven terms in the House of Representatives. Four years later, she became the first major-party black candidate to make a bid for the U.S. presidency.

*<http://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CHISHOLM,-Shirley-Anita-%28C000371%29/>*

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## *Women's Equality Day* Events

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*Library of Congress*

In 1995, a Wal-Mart in Florida advertised a t-shirt with a drawing of Dennis the Menace's friend Margaret saying, "Someday a woman will be President!" Some customers immediately protested the shirt, believing it to be too aggressive. Wal-Mart quickly pulled the shirt off the shelves, claiming Margaret's message went against the company's philosophy of "family values." Several months later, the store was persuaded to accept the shirt back into its inventory when many women came forward, outraged at the implications of the product's withdrawal from the shelves. Shirt design by Ann Moliver Ruben. Character likeness from King Features Inc.

Ford, Lynne E. (2011) *Women & Politics: The Pursuit of Equality Third Edition*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA.



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*Androcentrism* is the practice of placing value on the male experience and masculinity, and undervaluing the female experience and femininity. In an androcentric world, masculinity is treated as the norm or standard for culture as a whole, while femininity is treated as a sex-specific deviation from that standard.

Ford, Lynne E. (2011) *Women & Politics: The Pursuit of Equality Third Edition*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA.

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In 2013, the median annual earnings of women 15 and older who worked year-round, full time was \$39,157. In comparison, the median annual earnings of men were \$50,033. That means that female year-round, full-time workers earned 78 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts in 2013.

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2015/cb15-ff05.html>

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In 1848, the *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* was created at the first organized women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. One of its demands –women should be allowed to vote- was seen as the most radical request in the entire document.

Ford, Lynne E. (2011) *Women & Politics: The Pursuit of Equality Third Edition*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA.

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The word *gender* describes the socially-constructed roles and responsibilities that societies consider appropriate for men and women. Gender equality means that men and women have equal power and equal opportunities for financial independence, education, and personal development.

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/stories/stories.cfm?psid=2162>

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Distinguishing between *sex* and *gender* is important when thinking about males and females. A human's *sex* is based on physically defined biological function and chemical hormones. *Gender* then takes those sex-based characteristics and incorporates society's interpretation and attaches a value to the unique contributions of each sex. For example, only females can give birth and breast feed, which is indicative of their sex. However, allocating the job of raising the children after their physical birth is a socially defined gender role for women.

Ford, Lynne E. (2011) *Women & Politics: The Pursuit of Equality Third Edition*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA.

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While gender stereotypes have come a long way since some light has been drawn to many of them, the gender division of household labor remains strikingly unequal. Research shows that heterosexual couples with children in the United States display a sizeable difference in the amount of time women spend on household chores (more than twice their husbands) and caring for their children (about twice as many hours).

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. (2011). *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Exists in the Modern World*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY.

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Studies have shown that of the majority of household chores that women perform, the core household tasks that are repeated most frequently—like washing dishes, cooking, and laundry—are performed disproportionately by women. In relation to children, married mothers provide roughly two-thirds the hours of childcare required, while fathers tend to focus on the more attractive, interactive tasks, like reading or playing with their children.

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. (2011). *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Exists in the Modern World*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY.

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2011 median earnings for female and male full-time, year-round workers were \$37,118 and \$48,202, respectively.

*[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb11-ff16.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11-ff16.html)*

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*<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2015/cb15ff05>*

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In the fall of 2013, there were 10.9 million women enrolled in undergraduate college and graduate school. Women comprised 56.2 percent of all undergraduate and graduate college students. Of women 25 and older, 32 percent had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher as of 2014.

*<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2015/cb15-ff05>*

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Although many of the accomplishments and contributions of women have been lost from the history books, women have played a vital role in the course of human civilization. From raising families to leading armies, women have made untold contributions to history. In the 96 years since the 19th Amendment was certified, women have made strides in every facet of American life. More and more, the world is looking to our daughters to lead us, to heal us, to employ us, to thrill us on fields of play, and to protect us on fields of battle.

*<http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history>*

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Many women veterans face challenges when returning to civilian life that are different from those of their male counterparts, including raising children on their own or dealing with the psychological effects of events such as military sexual trauma. These issues, without intervention, can put women veterans at greater risk of becoming homeless.

*[http://www.va.gov/homeless/for\\_women\\_veterans.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/for_women_veterans.asp)*

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The World Economic Forum recently ranked the United States as 19th in the world on its gender gap index. Women comprise less than one-fifth of elected members of Congress, and the report identified political empowerment as the greatest gender equity issue for the United States. The U.S. ranked higher in economic empowerment, but women's earning power remains lower than men's. Women in the United States have a very high ranking for educational attainment, though, with high levels of literacy and enrollment in primary, secondary, and university education. At present, there are more women than men attending college in the U.S.

*<http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/stories/stories.cfm?psid=2162>*

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Mississippi became the last state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1984, finally condoning the right of women to vote.

*<https://www.usconstitution.net/constamrat.html>*

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## *Women's Equality Day* Milestones

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*Library of Congress*

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In 1971, Congress passed legislation to officially recognize August 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day. The day marks the anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which was passed on August 26, 1920, and gave women the right to vote. Women's Equality Day also draws attention to women's ongoing efforts to achieve full equality with men.

*<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/647111/Womens-Equality-Day>*

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In April of 2014, President Barack Obama signed an executive order to prevent workplace discrimination and empower workers to take control over negotiations regarding their pay. In addition, he signed a presidential memorandum directing the secretary of labor to require federal contractors to submit data on employee compensation by race and gender, helping employers take proactive efforts to ensure fair pay for their employees.

*<https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/equal-pay>*

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On August 21, 2015, for the first time in the more than 65-year history of the Army Ranger tab, two women graduated from the grueling 62-day course. Less than two months later, the third woman—and first Reservist—made it through. Capt. Kristen Griest, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Shaye Harver, and Maj. Lisa Jaster each completed a course with the same trials as their male counterparts.

[http://www.army.mil/article/154286/First\\_women\\_graduate\\_Ranger\\_School/](http://www.army.mil/article/154286/First_women_graduate_Ranger_School/)

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On January 29, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, making it easier to effectively challenge unequal pay. The Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that claims had to be filed within 180 days of an employer’s decision to pay a worker less, even if the worker didn’t learn about the unfair pay until much later. The Ledbetter Act allows complaints to be filed within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, and that 180 days resets after each paycheck is issued.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/01/30/archives-presidentobama-signs-lilly-ledbetter-fair-pay-act>

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In 1963, when President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, women were earning 59 cents on the dollar compared to men. Today, women comprise 57 percent of the nation's workforce, yet they are still experiencing a gap in pay compared to men's wages for similar work. The average woman in the U.S. earns about 23 cents less on the



dollar than the average man, and recent studies have shown that even when factors like professional specialization, hours worked, and education and experience levels are held constant, women still earn less than men.

<http://www.eeoc.gov/>

President John F. Kennedy signs the Equal Pay Act in the Oval Office of the White House, 10 June 1963.

*Photo by Abbie Rowe. White House Photographs. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston*

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The 19th amendment guarantees all American women the right to vote. Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of women's suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the U.S. Constitution. Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920.

*<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true>*

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In 2012, President Barack Obama announced unprecedented government action to combat one of the greatest human rights abuses of our time—human trafficking—which affects more than 20 million people around the world, many of them women and children. The president signed Executive Order 13627 to strengthen the U.S. government's zero-tolerance policy on trafficking in government contracting and launched several new initiatives to identify and assist survivors, increase resources, plan for future action, and grow public-private partnerships.

*<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/19/fact-sheet-obama-administration-s-comprehensive-efforts-promote-gender-e>*

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2011, the number of women 25 and older with bachelor's degrees was 31.4 million. Women also had a larger share of high school diplomas, as well as associate's and master's degrees. However, more men than women had professional or doctoral degrees.

*[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb13-ff04.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb13-ff04.html)*

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As of January 2013, women make up about 14.5 percent of the 1.4 million active-duty personnel in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force.

*[www.cnn.com/2013/01/24/us/military-women-glance/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/24/us/military-women-glance/index.html)*

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In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) into law. Under this Act, the federal government guaranteed men and women a minimum wage and overtime pay, extending basic workplace protections to all. The FLSA came about after years of negotiations spearheaded by the then-Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins—the first female cabinet member in U.S. history.

*<https://www.roosevelt.edu/policies/compliance-policies/human-resources/fair-labor-standards-act>*

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It wasn't until 1968 that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was able to revise the guidelines on sex discrimination, making it clear that the widespread practicing of "help wanted" advertisements that used "male" and "female" column headings violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

*<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm>*

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In 1974, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act was created to prohibit discrimination by sex and marital status in the granting of consumer credit. The Act directed credit card companies to issue cards to qualifying women without a husband's signature, which gave women power over their personal finances.

*<https://www.debt.org/credit/your-consumer-rights/equal-opportunity-act/>*

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In 1975, the Department of Defense reversed policies and provided women with the option of electing discharge or remaining on active duty upon becoming pregnant. Before 1975, women were forcibly discharged from service upon pregnancy or adoption.

*<http://www.wood.army.mil/eop/EO%20FILES/EOLC/women.ppt>*

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In 1981, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a law that stated a husband is "head and master" of his wife's property.

*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head\\_and\\_Master\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_and_Master_law)*

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In 1984, Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro secured the nomination as the first female vice presidential candidate on a major party ticket.  
*<http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/13081>*

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## Women's Equality Day Quotes

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Library of Congress

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At the end of the nineteenth century, American-born English socialite Lady Nancy Astor took a seat as the first elected female Member of Parliament in Britain. As she took her seat, a male Member welcomed her *“to the most exclusive men’s club in Europe.”* *“It won’t be exclusive for long,”* Lady Astor replied. *“When I came in, I left the door wide open!”*

Ford, Lynne E. (2011) *Women & Politics: The Pursuit of Equality Third Edition*. Cengage Learning: Boston, MA.

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Mary Wollstonecraft embodied the vision of a modern-day feminist in the late eighteenth century. She inspired people with her strong support of the education of women, their acceptance into professional careers, and their right to vote. *“I speak of the improvement and emancipation of the whole sex. Let women share the rights, and she will emulate the virtues of man; for she must grow more perfect when emancipated...”*

<https://fee.org/articles/mary-wollstonecraft-equal-rights-for-women/>

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Women have come a long way in the last two hundred years. In the late eighteenth century, women had virtually no rights under the law. In his 1758 publication *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Oxford law Professor William Blackstone explained that, “*the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during marriage or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs every thing.*”

<https://fee.org/articles/mary-wollstonecraft-equal-rights-for-women/>

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In August 1944, Anne Frank made her last entry in her famous diary. Three days later, after 25 months of seclusion, Anne and her family were arrested, along with two of the people who had helped to shelter them. Anne wrote in her diary, “*Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart.*”



<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/8/4>

Photo: <http://www.ushmm.org>

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*"With passion and courage, women have taught us that when we band together to advocate for our highest ideals, we can advance our common well-being and strengthen the fabric of our nation."* —

President Barack Obama

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg>

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Written in response to the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which had given women nationwide the right to vote, a New York Times editorialist wrote on August 29, 1920, *“Women in fighting for the vote have shown a passion of earnestness, a persistence, and above all a command of both tactics and strategy, which have amazed our master politicians. A new force has invaded public life.”*

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/dispatch\\_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3610](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/dispatch_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3610)

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President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Public Law 90-130 in 1967, giving women in the Armed Forces equal promotion and retirement benefits. The law also removed the 2% restriction on how many women could serve in the military. At the signing, President Johnson stated, *“I realize that a few of our gentlemen officers may not be too enthusiastic about this possibility...but from now on, the officers and men of our Armed Forces will just have to take their chances in open competition along with the rest of us.”*

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