

42-5018

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 26, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Today, on the anniversary of the ratification of the Women's Suffrage Amendment, I am requesting the Attorney General and all the Federal agencies to cooperate in eliminating sex discrimination from the laws and policies of the United States.

This country has a commitment to equality of opportunity for all citizens, yet a recent report from the Civil Rights Commission indicates that sex discrimination still exists in some Federal laws and policies. Last year the Department of Justice was directed to develop a plan for reviewing and revising Federal laws that discriminate on the basis of sex. At the request of this Administration, Congress has recently appropriated funds for the Task Force on Sex Discrimination in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice to implement the plan.

I am now requesting the heads of all Federal agencies and departments to initiate a comprehensive review of all programs which they administer in order to identify any regulations, guidelines, programs or policies which result in unequal treatment based on sex. Some agencies have already begun such efforts.

I am requesting that the head of each department and agency cooperate with the Attorney General in collecting and furnishing existing information and developing additional information where necessary and that they develop proposals to change any laws, regulations and policies which discriminate on the basis of sex.

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I am directing the Attorney General, as chief law officer of the Federal government, to coordinate all of the activities undertaken by the departments and agencies to eliminate sex discrimination. He has sent a letter to each agency today giving details of the proposed procedures.

Where statutory revision or repeal is necessary, I will recommend to the Congress that appropriate legislation be enacted. Where executive action will suffice, I will take appropriate steps to ensure that benefits and opportunities provided by the Federal government are made equally available to all, regardless of sex.

In taking this action, we intend to retain and possibly expand any existing protections and benefits provided for homemakers and families. We believe that offering opportunity to all should not threaten or diminish the protection provided those performing special functions in our society.

Federal law should be a model of non-discrimination for every state and for the rest of the world. The Federal government, which is actively involved in eliminating sex discrimination in many areas, should not uphold it in others.

It is my hope that the project initiated today will result in such a model and the goal of equal rights and opportunity for all our citizens under the law will be realized.



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[Redacted Signature Box]

Executive Secretary
B/HW
Date

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(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY) *W. H. H. H.*