

# New Frontiers

A newsletter for ★ educators

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS AT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

## Learn from Home with the Kennedy Library!

The Department of Education and Public Programs has a wide range of resources for at-home learning.

A new “Hands-on History” webpage brings popular activities from the Library’s public programs, such as the annual *Presidents’ Day Family Festival*, to students and families at home. There are history-based crafts for all ages that can be made with materials found around the house. Organized by theme, each activity provides instructions and templates in a downloadable format. They promote creativity and critical thinking, and can be used in conjunction with a lesson plan or as stand-alone lessons for classroom discussion. Visit [jfklibrary.org/learn/education/families/hands-on-history](http://jfklibrary.org/learn/education/families/hands-on-history).

Visit [jfklibrary.org/teachers](http://jfklibrary.org/teachers) to explore:

- Curricular Resources with classroom-ready lesson plans for grades 3-12
- Past issues of *New Frontiers: A Newsletter for Educators*
- Video and transcripts of past *Kennedy Library Forums*

During the COVID-19 health crisis, *Teaching and Learning Tuesdays*, a weekly digital resource guide provides easy-to-use materials on a variety of topics for elementary, middle, and high school grades. Visit [jfklibrary.org/learn/education/teachers/jfk-libraries-teaching-and-learning-tuesdays](http://jfklibrary.org/learn/education/teachers/jfk-libraries-teaching-and-learning-tuesdays). To sign up for these emails, contact [educationjfk@nara.gov](mailto:educationjfk@nara.gov). ★

## A Growing Women’s Movement and the Equal Pay Act of 1963

In 1960, forty years after women gained the right to vote, many barriers continued to limit their rights in the workplace and in society as a whole. Although they made up 1/3 of the workforce, women were often barred from higher positions and, on average, paid only 60% as much as men. In response to this inequality and discrimination, an ever-growing women’s movement continued to advocate for greater opportunities and rights for women.



President Kennedy meets with the President’s Commission on the Status of Women on February 12, 1962. The Commission’s chair Eleanor Roosevelt is on the left and Esther Peterson, the vice chair is on the right of the president. Washington, DC.

During the 1960 presidential campaign, Senator John F. Kennedy and his party expressed support for women’s equality. Many women, especially those in the Democratic Party and labor unions, backed his candidacy and helped to elect him president. Under the new administration, some women’s groups were disappointed to see how few women were named to leadership positions. Women held less than 3% of appointed positions and, for the first time since Herbert Hoover, no women were included in the cabinet. One of the women President Kennedy named to a leadership position was former lobbyist and labor activist Esther Peterson. As head of the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Labor, Peterson, with extensive expertise in women’s issues, was afforded a larger role than was typical for the position – a policymaking role.

At her urging, President Kennedy created the Commission on the Status of Women by Executive Order 10980 in late 1961. He appointed Eleanor Roosevelt its chair and Peterson executive vice chair. The bi-partisan Commission was charged with advising the president on women’s rights and labor issues including evaluating and

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## A Growing Women's Movement and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, *continued*

making recommendations for the improvement of the legal, social, civic, and economic status of American women. At the same time, the president directed several federal departments and agencies to work closely with the Commission and to provide it with any information it needed. The creation of the Commission called attention at the very highest level of government to the problem of inequality and discrimination against women that needed to be redressed.

At its first meeting in February 1962, one of the issues the Commission discussed was the legislative initiative on equal pay. The initiative was not new. In 1870, Congress had passed an amendment to an appropriations bill that had required that female clerks hired by the government receive pay equal to their male counterparts. In order to pass the legislation, the language was weakened and, consequently, limited the law's effectiveness. In 1945, a comprehensive Women's Pay Act was introduced to Congress, but failed to pass as had other similar proposals in the subsequent seventeen years. The Commission endorsed the renewed effort and Roosevelt reported to the press that unequal wages for comparable work were "contrary to the concept of equality and justice in which we believe." In July 1962, in response to the Commission, Kennedy also directed federal executive department and agency heads to open more federal jobs and promotions to women.

With Peterson's leadership, the Women's Bureau organized the legislative effort. She and her staff collected data on pay discrimination, built coalitions and garnered support from opponents to the initiative. Many segments of the business community, including the US Chamber of Commerce, opposed the legislation on the grounds that women were more expensive to employ. Consequently, it was an uphill battle. In March of 1962, hearings were held with representatives from various labor unions, The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the American Association of University of Women and the National Councils of Jewish, Catholic, and Negro Women testifying. Eleanor Roosevelt and actress Bette Davis presented testimony as well.

Of major concern to opponents of the draft legislation was the requirement of equal pay for "comparable work."

They argued that comparability would be challenging, if not impossible to determine; while advocates expressed concern that "equal" would be interpreted as the same or identical with small differences being the justification for unequal wages. A compromise was reached calling for "equal pay for equal work." This less controversial language meant there would be gender-based pay equity for "jobs requiring equal skill, effort, and responsibility, which are performed under similar working conditions." Congress passed the legislation as an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act which had established procedures for investigating violations of standards and well-defined penalties, a strategy the business community favored.

On June 10, 1963, President Kennedy signed the bill into law. In his remarks, he noted that the act, "represents many years of effort... to call attention to the unconscionable practice of paying female employees less wages than male employees for the same job. This measure adds to our laws another structure basic to democracy.... While much remains to be done to achieve full equality of economic opportunity – for the average woman worker earns only 60 percent of the average wage for men – this legislation is a significant first step forward."

Historians consider these three initiatives of the Kennedy administration – the creation of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, the order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in hiring federal employees, and the signing of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 – to have been significant, and in the opinion of some, the most significant since the early twentieth century in furthering the rights of women. The Equal Pay Act marked the first time the federal government entered the arena of safeguarding the right of women to hold employment on the same basis as men.

Today, women earn approximately 82% of the income for men and represent roughly 50% of the workforce in the US. Whose voices are being heard today on this issue? And whose voices will be heard in the future? Two lesson plans on the Equal Pay Act of 1963 for elementary and secondary school audiences respectively are featured in this edition and provide correlations to the issue today. ★

## LESSON PLAN ★ Elementary and Middle School

# Fighting for Equality: Esther Peterson Leads the Way on Equal Pay

In this lesson, elementary students conduct historical research on individual and collective efforts to achieve gender equality in the United States. First, students investigate the fight for voting rights for women by listening to and discussing *Elizabeth Started All the Trouble*, a nonfiction picture book by Doreen Rappaport. Then, they analyze an historical photograph from the Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum archives to learn about the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the actions Esther Peterson, the highest-ranking woman in the Kennedy Administration, took to achieve its passage. Lastly, an assessment brings a civic engagement component to the lesson as students research the gender pay gap today, and take action to address that issue.

### Historical Background

In 1960, although women made up more than one third of the labor force, they earned only about 60 cents for every dollar earned by men. Although legislation to advance equal pay had been attempted in 1870, and from 1945 through 1963, a new effort during the Kennedy Administration would result in another step forward towards gender equality.

President Kennedy appointed Esther Peterson, a former labor organizer and lobbyist, as Director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor and later as the Assistant Secretary of Labor Standards. At her urging, Kennedy created the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and supported her work in organizing the passage of the equal pay legislation. Her leadership in collecting data and bringing together key lawmakers, community and religious leaders, and labor activists was essential in the effort.

When President Kennedy signed the historic legislation on June 10, 1963, he remarked that it was a "significant step forward," but acknowledged that "much remains to be done to achieve full equality of economic opportunity..." Historians consider the passage of the Equal Pay Act to have been one of the most significant initiatives since the early twentieth century in furthering the rights of women.

Today, women continue to earn less on average than men. According to 2018 data reported by the National Women's Law Center, women were paid 82% of the income for men.

### Essential Question

How have women worked to fight for equal rights?

### Goal

Using children's literature and primary source material, students will learn about women who fought for equal rights and the strategies they used and continue to use to achieve change.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze a work of non-fiction to learn about three barriers women faced in history and three ways women worked to achieve equal rights.
- Analyze a photograph with Esther Peterson, Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Kennedy Administration and learn about her essential role in the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963.
- Research the current gender wage gap and take an action to address the issue.

### Materials

- *Elizabeth Started All the Trouble* by Doreen Rappaport
- Photograph AR7965-G of the signing of the Equal Pay Act on June 10, 1963 from the collections of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

*Note:* You can retrieve photo by typing AR7965-G in the SEARCH function at [jfklibrary.org](http://jfklibrary.org) or visit [jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1963/Month%2006/Day%2010/JFKWHP-1963-06-10-B?image\\_identifier=JFKWHP-AR7965-G](http://jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1963/Month%2006/Day%2010/JFKWHP-1963-06-10-B?image_identifier=JFKWHP-AR7965-G).

- List of True/False statements about the status of women in 1960

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**1848:** On July 19-20, the first Women's Rights Convention, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jane Hunt, Lucretia Mott, Mary Anne McClintock, and Martha C. Wright, takes place in Seneca Falls, New York.

**1850:** The first National Women's Rights Convention takes place in Worcester, Massachusetts on October 23-24. Annual conventions are held for the next ten years – with the exception of 1857.

## LESSON PLAN ★ Elementary and Middle School

# Fighting for Equality: Esther Peterson Leads the Way on Equal Pay

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### Procedure

1. Read and discuss *Elizabeth Started All the Trouble* by Doreen Rappaport. Have students indicate barriers faced by women or unequal treatment as the story is read. List students' suggestions.
2. Reflect on the story. Who were some of the women who led the movement for equal rights? What did they do to achieve change? What were some of their greatest achievements? How did the suffragists move President Wilson to support the 19th amendment to the Constitution which would give women the right to vote?
3. Focus on the last two pages of the book and the text, "The women had triumphed after battling for the vote for seventy-two years. But they knew their work was not over. There were still many unfair laws to change so that women could have true equality with men."  
"And we're still working on it."
4. Introduce the topic of equal rights for women 40 years after the passage of the 19th amendment by having students respond to True/False statements about women in 1960, including one on equal pay.

#### Suggested statements for the True/False activity.

##### In 1960:

- a. White women age 21 and older had the right to vote. (True – the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1920 but women of color were often prevented from voting by poll taxes, literacy requirements and physical threats.)
- b. A woman could lose her job for being pregnant. (True – The Pregnancy Discrimination Act was not passed until 1978.)
- c. Airlines could fire women flight attendants who gained weight. (True – it was not until the late 1960s that laws were passed to prevent this type of discrimination.)



President Kennedy signs the Equal Pay Act in the White House, Washington, DC. AR7965-G

- d. John F. Kennedy asked a woman to be Secretary of State. (False – Kennedy did not appoint any women to top level positions but there were many women who worked in the White House and in other departments.)
  - e. In the early 1960's, women were paid the same as men for the same work. (False – Women earned about 59 cents for every dollar men earned in the early 1960s.)
5. Transition to discussion of Equal Pay Act. Project the photograph AR7965-G and explain to students that it was taken on June 10, 1963 after President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, a law which made it illegal to pay women less money than men for the same job. [jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1963/Month%2006/Day%2010/JFKWHP-1963-06-10-B?image\\_id=JFKWHP-AR7965-G](http://jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1963/Month%2006/Day%2010/JFKWHP-1963-06-10-B?image_id=JFKWHP-AR7965-G) (or use AR7965-G in search function at [jfklibrary.org](http://jfklibrary.org)).
    - a. Ask students, "What is going on here?" As students provide observations and interpretations, ask "What do you see that makes you say that?" Keep prompting students with, "What more can you find?"
    - b. If students do not notice the pens in the photograph, draw attention to them and ask what they might be and why they are in the photo.

c. Notes on people, places and things:

- Ceremonial pens on President Kennedy's desk – directly to his left, there is a stand with several pens in it. It is common for a president to hold a ceremonial signing when they sign a bill into law. People who have been instrumental to the passage of the law are invited to the signing. The president often uses several pens to sign their name and then distributes them to those present.
- Esther Peterson (directly behind President Kennedy) served as Director of the Women's Bureau in the US Department of Labor and Assistant Secretary of Labor for Labor Standards. It was at Peterson's urging that Kennedy established a Commission on the Status of Women which was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. Peterson led the effort to pass the Equal Pay Act. She worked with women's organizations, labor unions, legislators, and citizens – some of whom are pictured in the photo – to gather information and support. For a full listing of who is in the photograph, visit [jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1963/Month%2006/Day%2010/JFKWHP-1963-06-10-B?image\\_identifier=JFKWHP-AR7965-G](https://jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1963/Month%2006/Day%2010/JFKWHP-1963-06-10-B?image_identifier=JFKWHP-AR7965-G).
- President Kennedy is handing a pen to Dorothy Height President of the National Council of Negro Women from 1957 – 1997. She was one of the most important leaders in the civil rights movement and helped plan the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom with Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders. She served on the President's Commission on the Status of Women.
- The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was the first law in which the federal government addressed pay equity for women.

6. President Kennedy supported the initiative and signed the bill into law. The women and men pictured with him, along with many others, conducted research, gave speeches, held meetings, and even protested in their efforts to secure the passage of the Equal Pay Act.

### Assessment

Students research equal pay today. Using the evidence they gather, they plan an action to promote the cause of equal pay. This could include writing a letter to a federal legislator, giving a speech, creating a pamphlet, or writing an editorial to send to a local paper.

### Recommended website:

- Association of American University Women: Infographics, graphs, and charts with specific information on women of different ethnicities, pay gaps in specific job areas, and an interactive map of the US with information on each state. <https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>
- Fact Sheet on the wage gap from the National Women's Law Center: <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/The-Wage-Gap-Who-How-Why-and-What-to-Do-2019.pdf>
- National Committee on Pay Equity: Information on Equal Pay Day (held on the day that “symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year.” (Equal Pay Day was March 31, 2020.) Includes an “Equal Pay Day Kit”, descriptions of activities on past Equal Pay Days, and a list of actions individuals and organizations can take to work towards equal pay. <https://www.pay-equity.org/day.html> ★

**1868:** The Equal Rights Association is established by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

**1869:** The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) is established and delegates from across 19 states appoint Elizabeth Cady Stanton as president. The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) is founded by Henry Blackwell, Lucy Stone, and Mary Livermore.

## Examining the Equal Pay Act of 1963

Although women represent nearly half of the labor force, according to 2018 data reported by the National Women’s Law Center, they were paid 82% of the income for men.

For more than a century, various organizations have attempted to achieve pay equity for women and men. In 1870, Congress passed an amendment to an appropriations bill that would give equal pay to female clerks hired by the federal government. In order to pass the bill, however, the original language was weakened, limiting the law’s effectiveness. In 1945, a comprehensive Women’s Equal Pay Act, was introduced to Congress, but it failed to pass. For the next 17 years, many similar proposals were sent to Congress without success.

In the early 1960s, although women made up one third of the labor force, they were paid 60% as much as men. Women also tended to be employed in low wage jobs that were considered appropriate for their sex.

At the urging of Esther Peterson, Director of the US Women’s Bureau, President Kennedy created the President’s Commission on the Status of Women in 1961 to evaluate and make recommendations to improve the legal, social, civic, and economic status of American women. The panel, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt until her death in 1962 and administered by Peterson, provided greater visibility of the difficult issues facing women. President Kennedy hoped that the Commission would “indicate what remains to be done to demolish prejudices and outmoded customs which act as barriers to the full partnership of women in our democracy.” (<https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/093/JFKPOF-093-004>)

On July 24, 1962, President Kennedy ordered the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies not to discriminate by sex in appointing or promoting employees of the federal government, a power that Attorney General Kennedy advised the president he could exercise under existing law. (<https://www.jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/USPCSW/001/USPCSW-001-010/USPCSW-001-010-p0047.jpg>)

In addition, through the efforts of Assistant Secretary Peterson, who had been appointed Assistant Secretary of Labor, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was passed by Congress and President Kennedy signed it into law on June 10, 1963. On signing the law, the President said, “It is a first step. It affirms our determination that when women enter the labor force they will find equality in their pay envelopes.” (<https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/045/JFKPOF-045-001>)

Historians consider these three initiatives on behalf of women’s rights of significant importance.

In this lesson plan, students discuss the issue of gender pay equity and examine the Equal Pay Act of 1963 for its strengths and weaknesses.

### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss the issue of gender pay equity in the past and today.
- evaluate the Equal Pay Act of 1963 for its strengths and weaknesses.
- analyze the significance of the signatures, stamps, and markings on an official document.

### Materials:

All materials available with the complete lesson plan at [jfklibrary.org/learn/education/teachers/curricular-resources/high-school-curricular-resources/examining-the-equal-pay-act-of-1963](https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/education/teachers/curricular-resources/high-school-curricular-resources/examining-the-equal-pay-act-of-1963)

- Brief Reading: “The Historical Context of the Equal Pay Act of 1963”
- The signed Equal Pay Act of 1963: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/299880>
- Handout: “An Examination of the Equal Pay Act of 1963”

**1878:** The amendment for Woman Suffrage is introduced in Congress.

**1890:** The NWSA and AWSA combine and form the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA) with a new focus on changing the laws within the states.

## Procedure

1. For homework, ask students to read “The Historical Context of the Equal Pay Act of 1963” and visit the National Women’s Law Center website to find the most currently available data on the pay gap between men and women: <https://nwlc.org/issue/measuring-the-wage-gap/>. Ask them to compare the current information with the pay gap in the early 1960s.
2. In class the next day, as an icebreaker, ask students if they have heard about the issue of equal pay for women and advocacy for equal job opportunities.

*Students may want to discuss the 2019 US women’s soccer team demanding pay equity with male players or even whether or not a woman could be elected president.*

3. Provide students with a copy of the signed Equal Pay Act of 1963.
4. Organize students into small groups and provide them with the handout “An Examination of the Equal Pay Act” that asks the following questions:

**a. What is the law meant to do?**

*“To prohibit discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages by employers engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce.”*

**b. Why was it necessary? (Provide at least 3 reasons)**

*The existence of wage differentials based on sex in industries engaged in commerce: “depresses wages and living standards for employees necessary for their health and efficiency; prevents the maximum utilization of the available labor resources; tends to cause labor disputes, thereby burdening, affecting, and obstructing commerce; burdens commerce and the free flow of goods in commerce; and constitutes an unfair method of competition.”*

**c. What are the provisions noted in Sec. 3 as additional subsection (d)(1) to Section 6 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938? What exceptions were made?**

*The law says employees, regardless of sex, must be paid equal pay “for equal work on jobs the performances of which requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility and which are performed under similar working conditions.”*

*Exceptions: when unequal payment is made because of (i) a seniority system; (ii) a merit system; (iii) a system which measures earnings by quantity or quality of production; or (iv) a differential based on any other factor other than sex.”*

**d. Based on these provisions and exceptions, do you see any “loopholes” that might affect its impact?**

Answers might include:

1. *How do you define “equal”? Jobs that may be comparable, but not exactly the same, are not covered by this law. What if an employer merely changes a job title to make one job look superior to another? (Esther Peterson, who was the driving force behind the law, wanted the word “comparable” in the law, not “equal.”)*

2. *Exception for seniority: Women may have to take time off for childbearing and childcare which might impact their seniority.*

3. *Exception for a merit system: Women may not be included in professional development opportunities that provide more “merit” for jobs of equal pay with men.*

4. *Number (iv) is so vague that it may include reasons such as personality. This provision could provide a large loophole for paying women less.*

**e. Which elected officials signed the document? Why were all signatures needed?**

*Signers: Speaker of the House, John McCormack and President of the Senate, Vice President Lyndon Johnson; President John F. Kennedy. For a bill to become a law, it must be passed by both Houses of Congress and signed by the president.*

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**1913:** Organized by the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and strategically planned for the day before the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson, the Woman Suffrage Parade takes place on March 3 in Washington, DC.

**1916:** The National Women’s Party is established by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns.

**1917:** The National Women’s Party pickets for women’s suffrage in front of the White House.

## Examining the Equal Pay Act of 1963

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- f. When was the document received by the White House? When was it signed by the president? Where did the document go after it was signed? Why?

*Received by the White House on May 29, 1963, signed June 10, 1963 at noon (President Kennedy wrote: "Approved June 10th 1963, The White House, Washington District of Columbia. United States of America. John Fitzgerald Kennedy. 12:00 P.M. U.S.A. J.F.K." The last word on the page is illegible.) It was transmitted to and received by the General Services Administration – NARS office of the Federal Register – on June 10, 1963 at 3:30 pm where it would be given a public law number and prepared for publication. The document was made official by the signatures and by receiving a number from the National Archives and Records Service (which became a separate entity in 1985 known as the National Archives and Records Administration) – Public Law 88-38 – noted at the top of the page.*

### Assessment

Have students write a 1- to 2-page essay answering the following prompts:

- What were some of the barriers facing women workers in the early 1960s?
- How did the Equal Pay Act of 1963 address these issues?
- What were some strengths and weaknesses of the law?

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, JUNE 10, 1963

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT SIGNING  
OF THE EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1963 IN THE  
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE.  
JUNE 10, 1963

I am delighted today to approve the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits arbitrary discrimination against women in the payment of wages. This Act represents many years of effort by labor, management, and several private organizations unassociated with labor or management, to call attention to the unconscionable practice of paying female employees less wages than male employees for the same job. This measure adds to our laws another structure basic to democracy. It will add protection at the working place to the women, the same rights at the working place in a sense that they have enjoyed at the polling place.

While much remains to be done to achieve full equality of economic opportunity -- for the average woman worker earns only 60 per cent of the average wage for men -- this legislation is a significant step forward.

Our economy today depends upon women in the labor force. One out of three workers is a woman. Today, there are almost 25 million women employed, and their number is rising faster than the number of men in the labor force.

It is extremely important that adequate provision be made for reasonable levels of income to them, for the care of the children which they must leave at home or in school, and for protection of the family unit. One of the prime objectives of the Commission on the Status of Women, which I appointed 13 months ago, is to develop a program to accomplish these purposes.

The lower the family income, the higher the probability that the mother must work. Today, one out of five of these working others has children under three. Two out of five have children of school age. Among the remainder, about 50 per cent have husbands who earn less than \$5,000 a year -- many of them much less. I believe they bear the heaviest burden of any group in our nation. Where the mother is the sole support of the family, she often must face the hard choice of either accepting public assistance or taking a position at a pay rate which averages less than two-thirds of the pay rate for men.

It is for these reasons that I believe we must expand day-care centers and provide other assistance which I have recommended to the Congress. At present, the total facilities of all the licensed day-care centers in the nation can take care of only 185,000 children. Nearly 500,000 children under 12 must take care of themselves while their mothers work. This, it seems to me, is a formula for disaster.

Press copy of President John F. Kennedy's remarks upon signing the Equal Pay Act of 1963, June 10, 1963, page 1.

## Extensions

- Have students research the laws that were passed after 1963 until today to minimize the gender wage gap. Have them consider why a gender pay gap still exists.
- In his remarks on signing the Equal Pay Act of 1963, President Kennedy provided data about women in the labor force and mentioned the dearth of licensed day care centers for children. Have students research current issues related to child care for working parents in either their state or the nation.

## Additional Resources

- Video: What Did the Equal Pay Act Do? From the History Channel, this brief video discusses the history of the Equal Pay Act and subsequent laws that have helped narrow the gender pay gap. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MR41T36LhMA>
- Esther Peterson Oral History #2 from the Kennedy Library. This oral history, taken January 20, 1970, includes Peterson's discussion of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (p. 45-54). <https://www.jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/JFKOH/Peterson%2C%20Esther%20E/JFKOH-EEP-03/JFKOH-EEP-03-TR.pdf>
- The Narrowing, But Persistent, Gender Gap in Pay. This Pew Research Center report from March 2019 analyzes 2018 data that illustrate the gender pay gap. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/019/03/22/gender-pay-gap-facts/> ★

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I am glad that Congress has recently authorized \$800,000 to State welfare agencies to expand their day-care services during the remainder of this fiscal year. But we need much more. We need the \$8 million in the 1965 budget for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare allocated to this purpose.

We also need the provisions in the Tax Bill that will permit working mothers to increase the deduction from income tax liability for costs incurred in providing care for their children while the mothers are working. In October, the Commission on the Status of Women will report to me. This problem should have a high priority, and I think that whatever we leave undone this year we must move on this in January.

I am grateful to those members of Congress who worked so diligently to guide the Equal Pay Act through. It is a first step. It affirms our determination that when women enter the labor force, they will find equality in their pay envelopes.

We have some of the most influential members of Congress here today, and I do hope that we can get this appropriation for these day-care centers, which seems to me to be money very wisely spent, and also under consideration of the tax bill, that we can consider the needs of the working mothers, and both of these will be very helpful, and I would like to lobby in their behalf.

END

Press copy of President John F. Kennedy's remarks upon signing the Equal Pay Act of 1963, June 10, 1963, page 2.

**1923:** The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), written by Alice Paul, is introduced into Congress and every session until 1970.

**1961:** At the request of Esther Peterson, Director of the United States Women's Bureau, President John F. Kennedy establishes the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and appoints Eleanor Roosevelt as the chair.

## Highlights from the *Kennedy Library Forums*

**K**ennedy Library Forums are a series of public affairs programs offered by the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum to foster public discussion on a diverse range of historical, political and cultural topics reflecting the legacy of President and Mrs. Kennedy's White House years. Videos of past *Kennedy Library Forums* are available for class viewing at [jfklibrary.org/forums](http://jfklibrary.org/forums).

Listed below are a variety of *Forums* highlighting both the strides made and the remaining challenges in the fight for women's full participation in our society – from science and technology to politics and the arts. Videos may be sorted by year or by selecting “Women” in the subject menu including:

### October 14, 2013



In 1961, President Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt until her death in 1962, the Commission published its report in 1963.

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University partnered to host a two-day, dual-site conference to mark this important historical milestone and to reflect on the status of American women 50 years later.

Allida Black, Eleanor Clift, Sue Cobble, Jill Ker Conway, Ellen Fitzpatrick, Sandra Fluke, Aileen Hernandez, Anita Hill, Tracy Roosevelt, and Hilda Solis spoke at “The 50th Anniversary of the Presidential Report on American Women,” an afternoon conference and discussion.



### March 24, 2016

Historian Ellen Fitzpatrick discussed her book, *The Highest Glass Ceiling: Women's Quest for the American Presidency*, about the campaigns of Victoria Woodhull (1872), Margaret Chase Smith (1964), and Shirley Chisholm (1972), and how their journeys illuminate today's political landscape. WGBH radio host and television commentator Callie Crossley moderated. Former New Frontier Network Steering Committee Member Yasmin Cruz introduced the forum.

### August 28, 2017



Misty Copeland, a Principal Dancer with the American Ballet Theatre, discussed her distinguished career with Meghna Chakrabarti, host and editor of *On Point* from NPR and WBUR.

### July 20, 2019



NASA Engineer Su Curley, who works on crew survival spacesuits and hardware for the Orion Program, including the journey to Mars, discussed current spacesuit technology, and showed visitors how suits are used for spacewalking.

November 5, 2019



Congresswoman **Barbara Lee** discussed her distinguished career and contemporary civil rights issues. **Kenneth Mack**, professor of law and history at Harvard University, moderated.

December 3, 2019



**Stacey Abrams**, *New York Times* bestselling author, nonprofit CEO, former Georgia House Democratic Leader and 2018 Democratic nominee for Governor of Georgia, discussed her distinguished career and continuing work on voting rights and social issues with **Jonathan Capehart**, opinion writer for *The Washington Post*.

*Kennedy Library Forums* are webcast live and recorded whenever possible. Written transcripts of most recorded events are also available. Visit [jfklibrary.org/Forums](http://jfklibrary.org/Forums) or visit our YouTube channel to view past *Forums*. ★

*Kennedy Library Forums* are made possible with generous support from:



★ SAVE THE DATE! ★

## Expanding Democracy: The 19th Amendment and Voting Rights Today A Kennedy Library Conference on October 27th and 28th

This year marks the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. To commemorate this landmark anniversary, the Library will present *Expanding Democracy: The 19th Amendment and Voting Rights Today* – a conference exploring the history of the suffrage movement and how efforts to broaden voting rights have evolved over time. The conference begins on the evening of October 27th with a special *Kennedy Library Forum* on the role of women in elected office. Panels featuring notable historians, authors, and leaders examining the origins and development of suffrage and contemporary voting rights issues will follow on October 28th. **Featured speakers will include:**

- *TIME*'s Molly Ball, author of the forthcoming book, *Pelosi*
- Susan Page, *USA Today*'s Washington Bureau Chief and author of *Madam Speaker: Nancy Pelosi and the Arc of Power*
- Ellen DuBois, UCLA professor emeritus of history
- Rachael Cobb, Suffolk University professor of government
- Martha S. Jones, Johns Hopkins professor of history
- Erin O'Brien, University of Massachusetts Boston professor of political science
- Manisha Sinha, University of Connecticut professor of history
- Theda Skocpol, Harvard University professor of government and sociology
- Marjorie Spruill, University of South Carolina professor emerita of history
- Lisa Tetrault, Carnegie Mellon professor of history
- Brenda Wineapple, author

Join us for this milestone anniversary event! Teachers and students are encouraged to attend. Email [educationjfk@nara.gov](mailto:educationjfk@nara.gov) to receive a special educator invitation prior to the opening of registration. ★



**1982:** The ERA is stopped three states short of ratification in June, and is officially reintroduced in the US Congress in July, and for sessions from 1985-1992, but is held in committee.

**2020:** Virginia's General Assembly passes a ratification resolution for the ERA by the state's House of Delegates (with 59 yeas and 41 nays) and in the state Senate (with 28 yeas and 12 nays), becoming the 38th state to ratify the ERA.

# JOHN F. KENNEDY

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*The Kennedy Library  
Department of Education and  
Public Programs offers free  
Museum passes to teachers  
considering a field trip to the  
Library. Please call 617.514.1600.*

### Museum Hours

Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.   
Closed Thanksgiving,  
Christmas, and New Year's Day

## ★ 2020 National Student/Parent Mock Election ★

*"I wish that all qualified Americans permitted to vote were willing to vote... [for the right to vote is] the most precious and powerful right in the world."*

– President John F. Kennedy

**I**t is never too early to register your students to participate in the 2020 election!

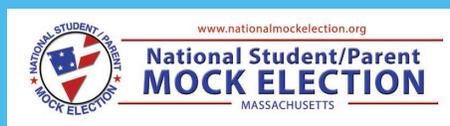
This voter education program actively engages K-12 students in state and national campaigns. The program emphasizes the importance of voting and the power of their ballots. Register your school to participate and receive curriculum packets featuring candidates' biographies, their positions on the issues,



and classroom activities. Visit [jfklibrary.org/MockElection](http://jfklibrary.org/MockElection) for more information.

The Kennedy Library will once again serve as state coordinator. Massachusetts educators may register by emailing [mock.election@nara.gov](mailto:mock.election@nara.gov).

Educators outside of Massachusetts may sign up at [www.2020nsme.com](http://www.2020nsme.com). ★



*Additional support for the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum's history and civic education programs is provided by Kenneth R. Feinberg & Camille S. Biros, of The Law Offices of Kenneth R. Feinberg, PC and:*

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