

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

Chairman Hampton of the Civil Service Commission recently reported to me on progress to assure equal opportunity in Federal employment. I have also reviewed the most recent statistics on the employment of minorities and women in the Federal Government.

Minorities and women have demonstrated their ability to compete successfully under merit principles. Over one-fifth of the jobs in Government agencies are held by Blacks, Spanish-speaking Americans, American Indians and Asian Americans. Nearly one-third of all Federal employees are women.

While I am encouraged by these figures, our efforts must continue. For example, within the general schedule and similar grade groupings, minorities represent only 5.2% and women only 4.5% of Federal employees at GS 13 and above. I therefore want you to know how I view equal employment opportunity. I urge you to provide strong leadership in your own organization.

Our Nation's strength is based upon the concept of equal opportunity for all our citizens. Decisions motivated by factors not related to the requirements of a job have no place in the employment system of any employer and particularly the Federal Government.

But more is required than non-discrimination and prohibition of discriminatory practices. What is needed are strong affirmative actions to assure that all persons have an opportunity to compete on a fair and equal basis for employment and advancement in the Federal Government. Affirmative action includes recruitment activities designed to reach all segments of our society, fair selection procedures, and effective programs of upward mobility so that all employees have the opportunity to gain skills to enable them to compete for higher level positions. Such actions are under way in the Federal Government. They must be continued and expanded.

Although the Federal Government has employed large numbers of minorities and women, vigorous efforts to assure equal employment opportunity must continue, particularly in those geographical areas and agencies and installations where more progress is needed. There are program areas where special emphasis is needed. There is reason to believe, for example, that the skills of the Spanish-speaking as a group have not yet been fully tapped. Also, a much wider range of employment opportunities for women can be opened. We cannot and must not permit persons to be locked into jobs not commensurate with their potential. I am looking to you and to every manager in the Federal Government to assure that employees, without regard to their race, national origin or sex, have an opportunity for advancement in accordance with individual abilities.

Moreover, men and women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds must be assured a fair opportunity to serve in positions where they can make a maximum contribution and participate in the decision-making process.

(MORE)

Equal employment opportunity doesn't just happen; it comes about because managers make it happen. I want equal opportunity to be reflected in every aspect of Federal employment. I have called on Chairman Hampton of the Civil Service Commission to keep me fully informed on an annual basis of the progress each Federal department and agency is making in this regard. Increased accountability on the part of Federal managers will help to promptly identify deficiencies and strengthen our EEO program at all levels.

Just as we will not condone preferences in employment decisions because of a person's race, ethnic origin or sex, we will not tolerate failure to vigorously carry out affirmative actions in support of equal employment opportunity. I am asking for your personal commitment and active cooperation in assuring that the American ideal of true equal employment opportunity is a reality in the Federal Government.

Please make my views known to all employees and managers in your organization. Their understanding of my objective is essential. Their support is required.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE
MARCH 6, 1975

#