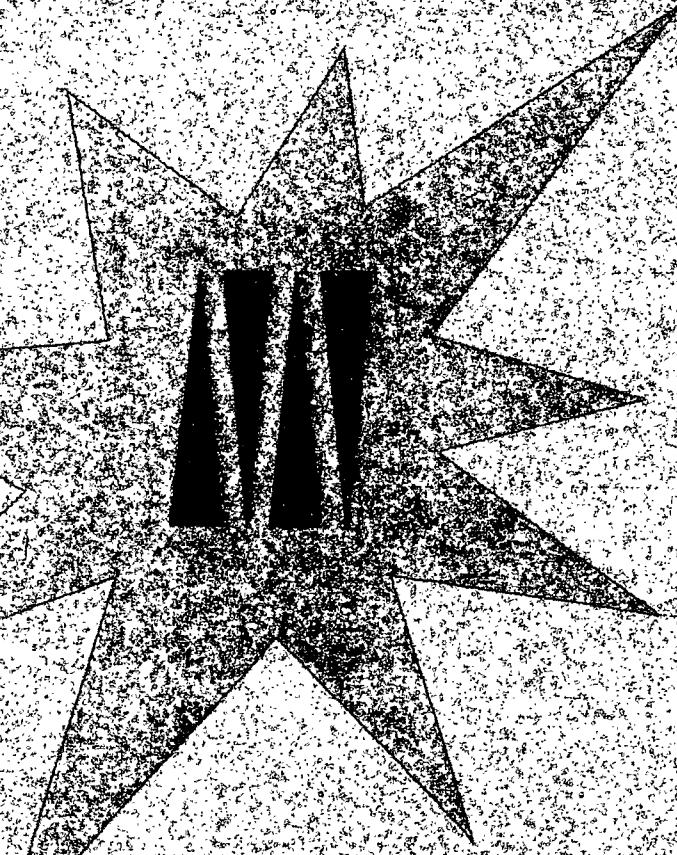


**R E P O R T**

of the committee

on  
**FEDERAL  
EMPLOYMENT**

4 JAN 16  
Copy 1964



*the president's commission on the  
status of women*

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## Foreword

"I believe that Federal employment practices should be a showcase of the feasibility and value of combining genuine equality of opportunity on the basis of merit with efficient service to the public."

—President John F. Kennedy.

Women's status in the Federal Service has been a subject of continuing interest to the Women's Bureau. This interest has been manifested by five studies relating to women Federal employees for the years 1919, 1925, 1938-39, 1947, and 1954. Data available for 1959 are comparable in most instances with the 1954 data and with portions of the 1938-39 study.

The types of positions which women hold, and the percentages they comprise of the workers in an occupation, are an index to women's employment status. Comparisons of current information about these factors with that available for 1938-39 indicate that women's status in the Federal Service has improved considerably during the past two decades. But there is still much room for improvement.

Strong interest in stimulating further progress in the position of women Federal employees was indicated by the President when he established the Commission on the Status of Women in December 1961. He specifically designated the employment policies and practices of the Federal Government among the various areas in which the Commission is authorized "to review progress and make recommendations as needed for constructive action."

ESTHER PETERSON,  
*Director, Women's Bureau.*

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**WOMEN IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 1961****THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS A SHOWCASE**

President Kennedy, in Executive Order 10980, listed employment policies and practices of the Federal Government as one of the subjects to be studied by the President's Commission on the Status of Women. In addition, in his accompanying statement,<sup>1</sup> he set a goal for the Federal service and gave a specific directive to the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission:

I believe that Federal employment practices should be a showcase of the feasibility and value of combining genuine equality of opportunity on the basis of merit with efficient service to the public.

It is my firm intent that the Federal career service be maintained in every respect without discrimination and with equal opportunity for employment and advancement. I have, therefore, requested the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission to review pertinent personnel policies and practices affecting the employment of women and to work with the various departments and agencies to assure that selection for any career position is hereafter made solely on the basis of individual merit and fitness, without regard to sex.

Employment practices of the Federal Government warrant special attention for several reasons. The merit system of the Federal Government embodies the principles of equal opportunity and of excellence which have been interwoven in varying patterns throughout our history. The concept of equal opportunity for employment on the basis of merit is explicit in the Civil Service Act of 1883. When the Committee began its work in April 1962, the application of the merit system already had resulted in greater opportunity in Federal employment for women than generally had been available in private industry.

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<sup>1</sup>Statement by the President on the Establishment of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, December 14, 1961. See Appendix A for Executive Order 10980.

## SINCE 1923

The percent of women employees has increased from 15.8 in 1923 to about 25 in 1961. In 1940, just prior to World War II, 18.6 percent of all Federal employees were women, and in 1944, at the height of World War II, almost 38 percent were women. In 1947, the percent had dropped to 23.8.

The following table graphically shows the gains of women in Federal employment since 1923:<sup>34</sup>

	Number of women employees	Ratio of women to men
1923.....	81,500	1 to 5
1939 .....	172,700	1 to 4
1944: World War II .....	1,110,500	2 to 3
1947: Return of war veterans .....	444,200	1 to 3
1951: Korean hostilities .....	577,500	1 to 3
1954: Total .....	521,900	1 to 3
White-collar, full-time .....	440,280	1 to 2
1959: Total .....	545,110	1 to 3
White-collar, full-time .....	460,355	1 to 2

The 1961 survey of the Civil Service Commission shows no substantial change since 1959.

## PROGRESS OF WOMEN

The status of women in the Federal service has improved greatly since 1862 when the Treasury Department employed a large number of women and paid them \$600 a year when male clerks received from \$1,200 to \$1,800 a year. Equal pay for women was authorized in 1870 and required in 1923, and equal consideration for appointment and promotion has been mandatory since September 1962.

Although the Federal Government is not yet a showcase, women's skills have been utilized more fully and they have been treated more equitably both as to pay and employment in the Federal Government than in private employment. In industry, equal pay and equal opportunity for employment are not yet accepted generally as employment principles.

<sup>34</sup>U.S. Department of Labor, *Women in the Federal Service 1939-1959*, p. 2.

### III

## NEW EMPLOYMENT POLICY

### ADOPTION OF NEW POLICY

Immediately after the Attorney General's 1962 opinion that the President had authority to regulate the right of appointing officers to ask for only men or only women in filling Federal positions, the President directed heads of agencies henceforth to make appointments to positions solely on the basis of merit and fitness. Appointing officers were told they could limit their considerations to eligibles of one sex only "in unusual situations where such action has been found justified by the Civil Service Commission on the basis of objective nondiscriminatory standards."<sup>35</sup> The Chairman of the Civil Service Commission consulted with the Chairman of the Committee and officers of the President's Commission in the development of such standards.

Dr. Kenneth O. Warner, a member of the Committee and director of the Public Personnel Association, was asked whether he knew of any standards or experience of State or city merit systems which would be helpful. As a result of this inquiry the Public Personnel Association made a survey of the policies and practices of 40 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and 32 cities. The replies included no standards or criteria that appeared to meet the terms of the President's directive. The Committee believes that preparation of the information by the States and cities may stimulate attention to this subject on the part of State and city governments. The analysis of the replies appears as appendix C of this report.

The Civil Service Commission adopted the following basic policy, which the Committee hopes will be a model for other employers:

The basic employment concept is that no training or position shall be denied any person on the basis of sex who meets the applicable experience, skills, and physical requirements for the training or duties in question. The Commission has determined that exceptions to this basic concept may be made (1) in law enforcement positions requiring the bearing of firearms, or in some few kinds of institutional or custodial employment, and (2) in certain unusual circumstances

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<sup>35</sup>Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, July 24, 1962.