

Mar 20 2009

In a move that acknowledges the concerns of women - a substantial voting bloc that helped him win the 2008 election - President Barack Obama established a White House Council on Women and Girls by executive order on March 11, 2009.

Valerie Jarrett, Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor, was named Chair of the Council and Tina Tchen, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Public Liaison at the White House, was appointed Executive Director.

[As defined by the White House](#), the Council on Women and Girls is intended to "provide a coordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls and to ensure that all Cabinet and Cabinet-level agencies consider how their policies and programs impact women and families."

Upon signing the executive order, President Obama stated:

The purpose of this Council is to ensure that American women and girls are treated fairly in all matters of public policy. My Administration has already made important progress toward that goal. I am proud that the first bill I signed into law was the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act](#). But I want to be clear that issues like equal pay, family leave, child care and others are not just women's issues, they are family issues and economic issues. Our progress in these areas is an important measure of whether we are truly fulfilling the promise of our democracy for all our people.

First-year focus of the Council:

- Improving women's economic security by working to improve the economic status of women
- Ensuring that the administration evaluates and develops policies that establish work/family balance
- Finding new ways to prevent violence against women at home and abroad
- Helping to build healthy families and improve women's health care

Initial Council membership comprised of:

Attorney General

Secretary of:

- State
- Treasury
- Defense
- Interior
- Agriculture
- Commerce
- Labor
- Health & Human Services
- Housing & Urban Development
- Transportation
- Energy
- Education
- Veterans Affairs
- Homeland Security

Administrator of:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Small Business Administration

Director of:

- Office of Management & Budget
- Office of Personnel Management
- National Economic Council
- Domestic Policy Council

US Ambassador to the United Nations

US Trade Representative

Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors