

Dear _____,

As your constituent, and a federal employee, I am asking you to support strengthening the Federal Women's Program (FWP). This program is essential in advancing the career status of women in the federal government.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy established the Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, to look into employment problems women encountered in the federal government. On October 13, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Executive Order 11375 (amending Executive Order 11246) prohibiting sex discrimination in federal employment and by federal contractors and created the FWP. Further, President Richard M. Nixon's Executive Order 11478 of 1969 raised the level of attention to the FWP by integrating it into the overall Equal Employment Opportunity Program. The primary purpose of the FWP is to improve the status of women in the federal government through education, career training and counseling and to provide management with information on workforce trends.

Federally Employed Women (FEW) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1968 shortly after Executive Order 11375 was issued. Although the FWP had been established, the early organizers of FEW realized that the federal government could dismantle the FWP, and they wanted to ensure that there would always be an organization dedicated to promoting equality for women and addressing concerns of women in the federal workforce. FEW works as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the federal government. This includes contact with Congress to encourage progressive legislation. FEW National officers meet with management officials at all agency levels to demonstrate support of the FWP, encourage officials to support the program and to obtain insight on the effectiveness of the FWP at the headquarters and local levels.

Currently the FWP has become another victim of vastly decreased funding in each federal agency. Over the years the staff assigned to manage the program has been severely reduced to the point where the responsibilities are given to a federal worker as a collateral duty, diluting the effectiveness of both positions. The obvious end result has been the virtual disappearance of an effective FWP in the federal government. There are very few active and operating FWP activities operating in federal agencies today, and this program is in crisis. The FWP was established to benefit women and to help support and guide their careers, and this is still needed in the federal government. Recent Office of Personnel Management statistics rank women at 28.9 percent of the Senior Executive Service, validating the urgent need for continued career training and advancement opportunities. FEW partners with the FWP to ensure that women are given the opportunities and guidance to advance in their professional careers. Without an active FWP, FEW is operating in a vacuum, and it is difficult to gain attention, support and funds for women to receive the guidance and support they need to advance. This is why your assistance to put emphasis back on the need for the FWP is

vital to ensuring that each federal agency has an active, effective and operating Federal Women's Program.

Please support the revitalization of the FWP by contacting and encouraging all federal agencies to implement and support this mandated program, thus ensuring that women are provided the opportunities to advance in their careers. If you need more information, please contact Tammie Kierstead, FEW's Special Assistant for the Federal Women's Program on (405) 620-1429 or at Kierstead@peoplepc.com or Janet Kopenhaver, FEW's Washington Representative on (703) 528-7822, or at janetk@eyeonwashington.com. We look forward to your support and much needed help.