

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2017: #DAYWITHOUTAWOMAN

It's been 108 years since the first National Women's Day was declared in the U.S.; in 1911 it became International Women's Day.

It would be another nine years before American women's right to vote was enshrined in the 19th Amendment, and another 68 years after IWD 1911 before women's suffrage was deemed a fundamental human right by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In spite of women's enfranchisement, they are under-represented in elected office; they have not realized parity in employment or pay across most industries. Their work is devalued more often and more deeply if they are engaged in emotional labor. They are far more likely to be under paid if they are women of color.

And now they fight to change this continuing inequity in spite of a world leader whose words and actions further denigrate their innate value.

The International Women's Day 2017 theme is Be Bold for Change – but after a couple lifetimes, more than slogans are called for. The Women's March movement, bolstered by its January 21st event and in concert with the International Women's Strike organization, called for A Day Without A Woman to emphasize the role of women in the economy as part of their

As part of A Day Without A Woman, women are on strike when they can afford to do so. If you see a woman on the job, consider how challenging it is to support a family making wages which have not only stalled over the last two decades, but are on average 20% less than men make in the same jobs. Depending on whose study one reads, it will take 60 to 170 years for women to reach parity. This is absolutely unacceptable.

Today, women are wearing red to show their solidarity with their striking sisters. If you see women not wearing red, consider how their individual right to free speech has been degraded by corporatism in spite of their enfranchisement.

Today, women are avoiding purchases. If you see women buying goods or services, consider how difficult it is for some women to buy what they need in advance because of pay inequity in spite of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Families are deeply impacted by economic precarity based in gender pay inequity.

Today, consider how women's freedom to make decisions about their reproductive health; will they be forced to quit their job because of unexpected pregnancy or inability to obtain adequate health insurance?

Today, consider the importance of women – regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, cis-/trans-/straight-gay-bi-sexuality – to a healthy economy and a thriving country.