



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS

Feminist Advocacy at the UN

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The recent decision of President Joe Biden to step aside and endorse his female running mate to carry the torch going forward is the mark of a remarkable man who has been an ardent supporter of women's rights for years. The US Women's Caucus applauds President Biden's courageous decision and would like to acknowledge his significant contributions to the advancement of women throughout his career.

Throughout his half century of public service, Joe Biden has consistently endorsed the adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, the federal guarantee of women's full equality under the law. He has demonstrated repeatedly his commitment to equal rights for women on many fronts, most notably his selection of Kamala Harris as his vice-presidential running mate and his strong support for her candidacy for President of the United States.

Joe Biden's understanding of the challenges facing women led to his decades-long leadership on domestic violence prevention. While head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he sponsored the first Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and ardently pushed for its adoption in 1994. At the 20th anniversary of the VAWA, he said in an opinion article that of all of the acts he sponsored while in the Senate, he was "proudest" of his role in the passage of VAWA (<https://time.com/3319325/joe-biden-violence-against-women/>).

We join with other women's rights activists in expressing our appreciation for VAWA as a defining moment in US history for women. As Sally Goldfarb of Rutgers Law School noted on its 25th anniversary, "The very existence of this federal law shifted public perception of the problem" (*TIME Magazine*).

Joe Biden has been instrumental in creating institutional avenues for women's rights. While President, one of his first acts was to create the White House Gender Policy Council, designed to work on women's issues and develop comprehensive plans to improve the lives of American women. The Council has actively sought to bring a wider gender perspective into government policies and programs at all levels. With the full support of President Biden, Director Jennifer Klein and her staff have produced ground-breaking documents for women such as the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality and the National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

President Biden has appointed a record number of women of all races to cabinet positions, UN Ambassadorship-level positions, judgeships, and other high level decision-making positions across all areas of the government. Most notably, President Biden succeeded in placing Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first female justice of color, on the U.S. Supreme Court. He has appointed 13 Black women to federal appellate courts, more than any previous president. In all, President Biden has placed 38 Black women in lifetime appointments on the federal bench.

President Biden has also taken very forceful action to protect women's reproductive rights. After the Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, President Biden passed a series of Executive Orders to protect women's access to reproductive care and contraception across state lines. He wrote Executive Orders to ensure that pregnant women would have access to emergency care. He also signed Executive Orders to ensure women serving in the armed services could receive needed reproductive care and services.

President Biden has been an outstanding champion of women's rights across his long career in government, and we are particularly grateful for his support of women's right to choose! We thank him for his faithful service to the country for the past fifty years, and are most grateful for his devotion to the cause of women's equality in our country.