

CLUW Welcomes Women's History Month 2026

Women have always been a part of history. Unfortunately, for centuries, their contributions and important contributions were overlooked: Early history texts often excluded women altogether, aside from accounts of powerful women like Queens. Historians were almost entirely men who saw the past as largely shaped by male heroes and their struggles.

The 20th century brought the birth of women's history as an academic discipline, a push to recognize the achievements of women, and a movement to ensure women had equal access to the academic institutions where their history might be taught. In the United States, the result was National Women's History Month, an annual celebration born from the activism of historians intent on making sure women got their due.

In 1981, Democratic Representative Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and Republican Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah sponsored a bipartisan bill to declare the week of March 8 National Women's History Week. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter declared the first National Women's History Week from March 2 thru the 8th. "Understanding the true history of our country will help us to comprehend the need for full equality under the law for all our people," he said in an address. The weeklong celebration took place annually until, in 1987, Congress followed the lead of several U.S. states and passed a joint resolution declaring the entire month of March Women's History Month.

Since 1995, presidents have issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as "Women's History Month." These proclamations celebrate the contributions women have made to the United States and recognize the specific achievements women have made over the course of American history in a variety of fields.

In the years since, the push to recognize and include women in the study of history has continued. In 1999, a national women's history commission created by President Bill Clinton recommended initiatives to find "hidden women" in museums and archives, establish statewide women's history initiatives, and incorporate women's history more extensively in educational curricula. Historians also began unearthing the contributions of historically marginalized women, going beyond white, cisgendered, heterosexual women to explore the vivid stories of women across society.

For the past 45 years we as a nation have been celebrating Women's History Month. Yet our fight to be seen continues.

In 2024, women working full-time in the U.S. typically earned about 81% to 85% of what men earned, earning roughly 81–85 cents for every dollar paid to men. The gap widens with age, race and occupation.

In June 2022, in a devastating decision that will reverberate for generations, the U.S. Supreme Court abandoned its duty to protect fundamental rights and overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ruling there is no federal constitutional right to abortion. The ruling in [Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization](#) abandoned nearly 50 years of precedent and marked the first time in history that the Supreme Court has taken away a fundamental right.

Since the [Court’s decision in Dobbs](#), more than a dozen states have banned abortion outright, forcing people to travel hundreds or thousands of miles to access abortion care or to carry pregnancies against their will, a grave violation of their human rights.

The U.S. and Israeli governments are presently waging unpopular wars. Wars disproportionately impact women, causing severe, gender-specific consequences including high rates of sexual violence, forced displacement, and increased mortality due to destroyed healthcare infrastructure. Women face heightened insecurity, economic devastation, and the burden of caregiving, yet also act as crucial agents of survival, [resilience](#), and peacebuilding in conflict zones.

Attacks on workers and their unions also have a disparate impact on women. Unions significantly boost women's economic security by increasing wages, narrowing the gender pay gap, and providing better benefits like paid leave and health insurance. Unionized women earn significantly more—up to 30% or \$224 more per week—compared to non-union women, particularly women of color.

For these reasons and many more, our need to remember our historical struggles and our victories is crucial. Here’s to Women’s History, this month and all year round!