



State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

EQUAL PAY DAY

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, women are an important economic force in North Carolina and across the United States as employees, employers, consumers, business owners, caregivers, and more, and yet they continue to experience a significant wage gap, earning less than men on average for comparable work, an imbalance that impacts the economic stability of families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Equal Pay Day symbolizes the point in the year when the average earnings of women finally equal the previous year's earnings of men, marking the continuing inequality in our workplaces. This disparity is evident in the 2025 North Carolina Department of Administration Division for Women and Youth's sixth report in the Status of Women series, titled *Investing in Economic Opportunity for Women in North Carolina*; and

WHEREAS, the report found that the gender wage gap for women's median earnings compared to men's in North Carolina narrowed from 80.9 percent to 83.4 percent from 2016 to 2023, raising the state's national ranking from 31st to 9th. However, despite this progress, a woman with a bachelor's degree earned 72 cents for every dollar earned by an equally educated man, highlighting continued inequities in earnings; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina women working full time spend 20 percent to 26 percent of their annual incomes on infant child care, demonstrating the impact of caregiving responsibilities on women's economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS, eliminating pay inequity and expanding access to affordable child care strengthens families and communities, contributing to the overall economic growth and prosperity of our state. Moreover, fair pay is not only a matter of justice but also a necessary factor in fostering economic opportunity and equity across education, business, government, and public service; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Council for Women Advisory Board is committed to promoting policies, research, and practices that support pay transparency, accountability, and equitable compensation across industries and professions; and

WHEREAS, National Equal Pay Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness about wage disparities and encourages government, business, and nonprofit sectors to work together to advance economic opportunity for women;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim March 26, 2026, as "EQUAL PAY DAY" in North Carolina and commend its observance to all residents.





JOSH STEIN
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this second day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.