

# The pursuit of equality in the united states workforce

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Under the EEO law, job-related factors are the only determinant qualifications in filling vacant posts.

The development of the EEO guiding principles can be traced back to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act in 1883, which prohibited political favouritism in filling federal posts. Executive orders 0948 and 10955 issued in 1940 and 1961 respectively marked the first, concrete steps in the elimination of workplace discriminatory policies touching on race, creed or colour. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 added the gender concept in the fight to equality (Pole, 1993). Civil Rights Act of 1964, however, was the most comprehensive law that laid the foundation for later executive orders as well as legislative reviews. It not only prohibited outright discrimination on the classes named above in addition to religion and national origin but also established a commission to fast implementation. The subsequent executive orders such as 11246 (1965), 11375 (1967) and 11478 (1969) were mere affirmations of clauses in Civil Rights Act of 1964 with very little effect to what was already a public policy (Pole, 1993). Nonetheless, Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 mandating equality of persons aged between 40 and 70, the 1990 enactment on disability and the more recent legislations incorporating pregnancy and sexual harassment have explicitly contributed in designing an inclusive equality principle within the workplace.

Arguably, women have been a major beneficiary block that has gained considerably with the progressive institutionalization of the equality principle nationally since the enactment of the Civil Rights Act. Hillary Clinton's shot at

the presidency in the run-up to the 2008 presidential elections not only demonstrated the extent of the breakthrough to the executive ranks long dominated by white males, but also signified a general acceptance of woman leadership from a society that has come full cycle in confronting a rather conservative past full of untenable denials.