

try to mobilize your friends and the people that are affiliated with it, first of all, think about how this is a specific example of the kind of challenges we face at this moment in our history—all this technology, all these changes, everything going on. And it is fundamentally the test of a decent society and certainly a great democracy like ours that we embrace all the changes that are going on, but we do it in a way consistent with the basic values that got us where we are over the last 220 years. Secondly, remember to put a human face on it, and remember every day that goes by that this bill does not pass—every single day somewhere in America there's another story like Ricka's. There ought not to ever be another one, and with your help we can stop it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ricka Powers, breast cancer patient who introduced the President; and Regina Benjamin, M.D., member, board of trustees, American Medical Association.

Statement on Signing an Executive Order on Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government

May 28, 1998

Today I have signed an Executive order entitled "Further Amendment to Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government." The order provides a uniform policy for the Federal Government to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in the Federal civilian workforce and states that policy for the first time in an Executive order of the President.

It has always been the practice of this administration to prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation in the civilian workforce, and most Federal agencies and departments have taken actions, such as the issuance of policy directives or memoranda from the agency heads, to memorialize that policy. The Executive order I have signed today will ensure that there is a uniform policy throughout the Federal

Government by adding sexual orientation to the list of categories for which discrimination is prohibited in Executive Order 11478 (i.e., race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or age).

This Executive order states administration policy but does not and cannot create any new enforcement rights (such as the ability to proceed before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). Those rights can be granted only by legislation passed by the Congress, such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. I again call upon Congress to pass this important piece of civil rights legislation which would extend these basic employment discrimination protections to all gay and lesbian Americans. Individuals should not be denied a job on the basis of something that has no relationship to their ability to perform their work.

Executive Order 13087—Further Amendment to Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government

May 28, 1998

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, and in order to provide for a uniform policy for the Federal Government to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 11478, as amended, is further amended as follows:

Section 1. The first sentence of section 1 is amended by substituting "age, or sexual orientation" for "or age".

Sec. 2. The second sentence of section 1 is amended by striking the period and adding at the end of the sentence "; to the extent permitted by law."

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 28, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 1, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 2.