



Seventy-fifth Anniversary Year of the Department of Labor

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

March 4, 1988, will be the seventy-fifth anniversary of President William Howard Taft's signing into law an act establishing the United States Department of Labor. In celebrating this milestone, we honor both the mandate of this ninth Executive department and the men and women who have made that mandate a reality through the years.

Recognition of the need for a Department of Labor began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Labor organizations such as the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) urged the creation of a Federal department to deal with matters affecting working people. A Bureau of Labor was established in the Department of the Interior in 1884. This Bureau was made an independent, but not Executive-rank, Department of Labor in 1888. When the Department of Commerce and Labor was created in 1903, the Department of Labor returned to bureau status within it. The famed labor leader Samuel Gompers and others then campaigned for a Cabinet-level Department of Labor.

That campaign bore fruit with President Taft's bill-signing in 1913. The mandate of the Department of Labor was "to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment." That immense task has inspired the Department ever since.

The Department has fulfilled its duties during war and peace, during depression and prosperity. Through the years, the Department of Labor has improved the lives of working people and benefited all Americans through its contributions to the success of our economy.

Among other tasks, the Department helps workers find and train for jobs; monitors changes in employment, prices, and other economic measures; oversees the broad range of working conditions and safeguards working people's rights; assures and strengthens collective bargaining; and ensures freedom from discrimination. Seeking to help business and industry achieve economic growth and stability, the Department also promotes cooperative relationships between labor and management and encourages collaborative efforts with trade unions and employer organizations.

The Department has played a significant international role as well, cultivating understanding among labor organizations throughout the world and fostering free unions and efficient governmental labor institutions in other nations.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the year 1988 as United States Department of Labor Seventy-fifth Anniversary Year. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this Anniversary Year with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. In order to enhance participation in this important observance, I call upon the Secretary of Labor to establish an Honorary Committee for the Department of Labor Seventy-fifth Anniversary Year, and to invite all living former Secretaries of Labor and the Presidents of the AFL-CIO and the Chamber of Commerce to act as Co-Chairs of the Committee. I also call upon the Secretary to invite other distinguished persons to serve as Committee members, including representatives of the Congress, labor, management, and academia.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan