



2004-1

**EXECUTIVE ORDER ABOLISHING THE WOMEN'S COMMISSION AND
CREATING THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS**

WHEREAS, while women have made extraordinary strides in Illinois and throughout the United States toward economic and social equity over the years, barriers to equity continue to exist; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and desirable to examine the economic, societal and legal barriers that do continue to exist, and to study the best means by which to eliminate them; and

WHEREAS, the work of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women over the past five years has been invaluable for its thorough statewide outreach to identify the challenges that need to be met in order for women to become economically independent while meeting their families' needs; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Governor not only accomplished, but exceeded many of the Commission's recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women has provided the foundation on which to build an office to meet the ever-evolving challenges of health, education, family care, and economic independence on behalf of the women of Illinois;

THEREFORE, I hereby order the following:

- I. CREATION OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS
 - A. The Governor's Commission on the Status of Women created by Executive Order Number 1 (1997) and Executive Order Number 1 (1999) are hereby abolished.
 - B. There is hereby created within the Governor's Office an Office of Women's Affairs. This office shall be headed by a Director of Women's Affairs appointed by the Governor and who will report to the Office of the

Governor. The Director may appoint necessary staff with the approval of the Office of the Governor.

II. PURPOSE

Building on the accomplishments of the Commission, the purpose of the Governor's Office of Women's Affairs shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A. To provide an inter-governmental and public/private "clearinghouse" of initiatives, programs, and legislation to promote health, education, family care, and economic independence on behalf of women,
- B. To maintain a resource pool of agency heads, legislators, and private sector professionals (including former commissioners), serving as volunteers, who can be accessed, based on their expertise, for long and short-term projects, and
- C. To direct and maintain ongoing collaboration between state government and private sector professionals acting as advocates for policies, programs, and initiatives to benefit women's health, education, families, and economic security.

III. POWERS AND DUTIES

The Governor's Office of Women's Affairs shall have the following powers and duties:

- A. Collect and maintain information on programs and initiatives of state agencies and on legislation beneficial to women,
- B. Encourage state agencies to apply a proactive focus on women's issues within respective domains,
- C. Advocate for the passage of crucial pieces of legislation affecting women and their families,
- D. Act as liaison between state agencies to keep them informed of each other's work and to encourage and maintain the sharing of information and resources,
- E. Serve as an information center on government services, private services and resources available to women,
- F. Maintain a resource pool of committed professional to access for long and short-term advisories on women's issues,

- G. Maintain up-to-date website information and links, and
- H. Develop strategies and opportunities for disseminating information to the public about the purpose and work of the office.

IV. SAVINGS CLAUSE

Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to contravene any state or federal law.

V. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Executive Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid in a court of competent jurisdiction, this invalidity does not affect any other provision or application of this Executive Order which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. To achieve this purpose, the provisions of this Executive Order are declared to be severable.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Executive Order shall be in full force and effect upon its filing with the Secretary of State.

ROD BLAGOJEVICH, Governor

Issued by Governor: _____, 2004
Filed with Secretary of State: _____, 2004