



Belmont Human Rights Commission Statement on International Women's Day

The Belmont Human Rights Commission joins the world in recognizing March 8 as International Women's Day and celebrates the leadership, strength, and courage of women and girls.

International Women's Day was launched in 1911 by Clara Zetkin and was originally known as International Working Women's Day. Clara Zetkin advocated for women's universal suffrage and believed that an international recognition of women's rights would link nations around the suffrage issue. Her strategic selection of March 8 was to commemorate a 1908 New York City needle workers demonstration where women marched in thousands to support the right to vote and the right to unionize.

The day gained international ground through the 1945 UN Charter proclaiming gender equality as a fundamental human right. In 1975, which the UN declared as International Women's Year, March 8 was sanctioned as International Women's Day. In several countries, March 8 is an official holiday and is commemorated through cultural practices and various events. Although steps forward have been made due to feminist movements and the efforts of trailblazing women, women's rights still languish. Institutionally and systemically, male dominance prevails.

We need education programs that help us to undo gender inequities. We need to address gender imbalances in caretaking. We need to take political and legal action to end violence against women and girls. We need to end stereotyping in the media and online harassment of women and girls. We need access to affordable quality care, including childcare, through increased public investment to address gender imbalances in care work, both paid and unpaid. We need equal access to labor markets and equal pay. We need to undo the imbalance in STEM education. This list is certainly not exhaustive, but merely demonstrates how much work there is to be done.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, the Belmont Human Rights Commission is committed to raising public consciousness and supporting actions against gender inequality locally, nationally, and globally.

The Belmont Human Rights Commission is dedicated to fighting discrimination in all forms and increasing visibility and awareness of issues regarding diversity and discrimination in our community. If you have experience discrimination in Belmont, please contact us at belmont.hrc@gmail.com or call 617-993-2795.