

Women's Suffrage

AND THE 19TH AMENDMENT

What is the 19th Amendment?

The 19th Amendment to the US Constitution stated that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on the account of sex." The amendment was born from the women's suffrage movement and the culmination of over 70 years of activism for women's equality.

The national suffrage movement gained momentum following the first women's convention, the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. The amendment itself was first introduced to Congress in 1878. After decades of agitation, the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) formed in 1890 and continued to advocate for women's equality.

During World War I, prominent suffragette Alice Paul staged large-scale silent protests at the White House. In 1917, following the arrest and imprisonment of 200 protestors, President Wilson succumbed to national pressure and announced support for the movement. The Amendment was passed by both the House and Senate in 1919, achieving ratification on August 18, 1920. Eight days later the Amendment was adopted into the US Constitution and August 26th is now considered Women's Equality Day.



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Who were the key figures?



SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Anthony was an early leading figure in both anti-slavery and women's rights movements. She worked throughout her life on both issues. In 1869, along with her close associate Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she founded the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA). In 1872, she was arrested for voting in her home town, was instrumental in having the 19th Amendment introduced to Congress, and helped create the International Council of Women, which is still active today.



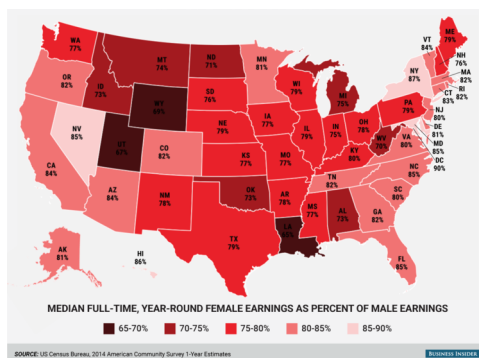
ALICE PAUL

Paul transformed into a more militant suffragette while studying in England from 1907-1910. She later joined NAWSA and co-organized a massive women's march in 1913. In 1916, Paul broke from NAWSA to form the National Women's Party (NWP) where her "Silent Sentinels" protested for suffrage outside the White House. The resulting imprisonment of protestors garnered national sympathy and spurred President Wilson to publicly support the 19th Amendment. Paul continued to advocate for full equality and authored the Equal Rights Act.

Women's Equality Day

CONTINUING THE FIGHT

Since the adoption of the 19th Amendment, progress towards full equality for all women (regardless of sexuality, ethnicity, race, ability) has been slow. Though the Equal Rights Act was introduced in 1923, it was not passed in the House and Senate until 1972, and it has yet to be fully ratified and implemented. Women still face significant inequality on many fronts. **White women make 83% of men's salaries (women of color make even less) and 42% of women will face workplace harassment in their careers.** We are currently running a survey on women's experiences of workplace harassment, and our early data suggests that this systemic culture reaches every occupation, across every salary, geographic location, and ethnic background.



Continued visibility from the #metoo and Time's Up movements, as well as the abuse scandal with USA Women's Gymnastics have shone a light on harassment and abuse, while other issues of inequality remain hidden. **The gender wage gap directly impacts women's equality and equity.** High profile stories, like the US Women's Soccer Team, bring needed attention to specific instances, but little attention is paid to the impact on lower income professions and their intersection with race, ethnicity, or sexuality. While social media has helped to educate the general public and spread awareness, women still face systemic inequality throughout the United States and the rest of the world. From **access to health services and menstruation products**, representation in pop culture and politics, to equal pay for equal work and **equal opportunities in all fields of employment**, the work of the early suffragettes should be remembered as heroic yet unfinished.

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