

A Just System

Perhaps most intuitively and directly, the 19th amendment, once passed Congress and ratified by the states, has empowered women with the right to vote and become represented in our democracy. In my hometown of Harris County alone, women are more likely to be registered to vote than men (Ledoux). This is reflective of Texas as well. Across the United States, over half of women (fifty-five percent) who were eligible to vote also cast ballots in the 2018 midterms in November, compared to approximately fifty-one point eight percent of men, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of newly released data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Additionally, women's suffrage has encouraged female candidates in all factions of the political spectrum to break the glass ceiling on federal, state, and local elections and propose revolutionary legislation on gendered issues like reproductive labor, the right to abortion, and menstrual poverty.

But not only has the 19th amendment encouraged a more representative democracy, the effects of signaling a level playing field for men and women under the eyes of the law have also rippled throughout the world as the United States once again became a beacon of liberty for all who are lost. Latin American feminists, for example, extended their own broader meanings of *feminismo*, which was defined as not only equality under the law but also by social and economic rights and anti-imperialism (among other goals) to gather larger cohorts of support (Interchange). From a global perspective, the United States also won women's suffrage ahead of several other countries, including Britain, France, Italy, and Spain and thus they followed soon after (Hjelmgaard).

These consequences have improved material conditions from gender minorities all across the country. No longer are women contributing to the wellbeing of our state through their civic duties without any political recognition. No longer are women harassed at the workplace without repercussions due to the efforts of coalitions consisting of women supporting women such as in #MeToo, Time's Up, and the Weinstein effect. No longer is half of the eligible voting population in the United States ignored.

However, the fight for women's rights did not end in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention or in 1919 when Congress finally passed the 19th Amendment. The fight for women's rights is not even an event. It is a continuous, sometimes imperfect, but well-intentioned process that the 19th Amendment only intensified. There are still indisputable disparities in wealth and wages. There is still a lack of representation from women of color in politics and feminism writ-large. There is still work to do and we cannot afford to be complacent in inequality. It is up to us and the future generations to further the insatiable spirit of the 19th amendment and to channel the leadership of those like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and everyday individuals, such as Virginia Minor, who laid the groundwork to champion a more just system and not just a system.

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