

With Voice and Vote

Within the last century, women have gone from kitchen cupboards to the President's Cabinet. The transition of women from domestic to public circles can be traced to the early 20th century suffrage movement, as women, tired of their second-class treatment, took to the streets for basic rights and equal treatment. The ratification of the 19th amendment, granting women the vote, was a turning point in amplifying women's voices across the United States, creating a foundation for equality and social justice.

The right to vote gave women the power to bring their needs into political discourse. Prior to 1920, women spoke out on their political priorities- such as Prohibition, abolition, and child labor- but were reliant on male voters and excluded from the democratic process. The vote gave women direct control in electing officials who stood for their beliefs. In an effort to appeal to this growing voter demographic, politicians revised the national agenda to include child welfare, women's health, access to education, divorce equality, property rights, and fair wages, alongside many other important issues that had long been ignored. Today, reproductive rights, fair wages, and women's rights remain prominent issues in the 2020 election as presidential hopefuls engage with women who currently contribute to fifty-three percent of the electoral vote.

The nineteenth amendment not only granted Lady Liberty the vote, but also paved a new path for women in politics and the workforce. While women ran for public office prior to the nineteenth amendment, full enfranchisement legitimized women's political campaigns and increased voter support. Under the leadership of female advocates, women took their calls for equality from banners to bills. Reforms were passed for education, equal pay, non-discriminant

employment, and maternal leave, empowering women across various American industries. The nineteenth amendment encouraged the rise of female lawmakers who were able to sponsor progress within the public sector.

The ratification of the nineteenth amendment was the culmination of decades of demonstrations, parades, writings, speeches and pickets. It's passing not only exemplified the power of women to create social change, but also validated their voices. The women's suffrage movement leading up to the successful passage of the nineteenth amendment set a precedent for future waves of feminism, including today's Women's March on Washington. Movements such as #MeToo, which empower women to speak out against sexual harassment, gain their strength from the concept that women's voices matter. The nineteenth amendment gave more than the vote; it gave a voice to millions of women who continue to speak out and create change.

Today, the nineteenth amendment continues to contribute to our society as women run for presidential office, pass monumental legislation, spearhead impeachment trials, emerge with the career sector, speak out for their rights and stand for the people of America.