

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2020-4656, by Representatives Doglio, Dye, Van Werven, Ramos, Kraft, Chambers, Thai, Orwall, Duerr, Shea, Dufault, Slatter, Senn, Santos, Chapman, Hudgins, Kilduff, Walsh, Ryu, Callan, Gregerson, Leavitt, Morgan, Rude, Riccelli, Bergquist, Cody, Robinson, Dolan, Macri, Valdez, Pellicciotti, Kloba, Stonier, Pettigrew, Tharinger, Appleton, Mead, Paul, Pollet, Tarleton, Peterson, Ormsby, Frame, Ortiz-Self, J. Johnson, Ramel, and Eslick

1 WHEREAS, March 22, 2020, marks the one hundredth anniversary of
2 the Washington State Legislature ratifying the 19th Amendment to the
3 United States Constitution, legalizing the right to vote for most
4 women in the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, Washington women and men fought with great perseverance
6 in the face of often stern resistance for women's right to vote
7 nationally and in our state for more than sixty-five years, both
8 during Territorial days and after statehood before the 19th Amendment
9 authorizing women's suffrage was approved by our state Legislature;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, In 1853, eighteen-year old Catharine Paine Blaine, the
12 youngest signer of the Declaration of Sentiments at the 1848 Women's
13 Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, brought the message of
14 women's rights to the new Washington Territory and later became one
15 of only two women who signed this historic Declaration to actually
16 vote in their lifetime; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1854 early Washington Territorial legislator Arthur
18 Denny proposed a women's suffrage bill that failed by only one vote;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, In 1867 Washington Territorial legislator Edward
21 Eldridge successfully prime sponsored an act that struck the word
22 "male" from the voting laws, thus technically opening up voting to
23 "all white American citizens above the age of twenty-one," most

1 notably including women; however, this interpretation of the law was
2 not widely embraced and women were routinely turned away at the
3 polls; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1870 sisters Mary Olney Brown and Charlotte Olney
5 French launched several attempts to cast votes in Thurston County
6 and, eventually succeeding, became the first women to successfully
7 cast ballots in Washington Territory and thus to encourage others;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, In 1871 Pacific Northwest women's rights leader Abigail
10 Scott Duniway organized a speaking tour with national suffrage
11 movement leader Susan B. Anthony through Washington Territory to
12 promote women's suffrage; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1871 Susan B. Anthony became the first woman to
14 address the Washington Territorial Legislature and cofounded the
15 Washington Women's Suffrage Association; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1871, Washington Territorial Legislature passed an
17 anti-suffrage law declaring that women could not vote until Congress
18 made it the law of the land; and

19 WHEREAS, On November 23, 1883, women living in Washington
20 Territory gained the right to vote by action of the Territorial
21 Legislature; and

22 WHEREAS In 1883, when the Territorial Legislature enacted women's
23 suffrage, African American women in Washington Territory became some
24 of the first to have voting rights in the country; and

25 WHEREAS, On November 26, 1886, the Washington Territorial
26 Legislature amended the 1883 act to state clearly that "all American
27 citizens male and female" could vote; and

28 WHEREAS, In 1887 the voting rights that were extended to women in
29 Washington Territory in 1883 were revoked by the Washington Territory
30 Supreme Court; and

31 WHEREAS, In 1888, the Territorial Legislature again enacted
32 voting rights for women, but again it was overturned by the
33 Territorial Supreme Court that same year; and

34 WHEREAS, Washington women leaders such as Emma Smith DeVoe and
35 May Arkwright Hutton and many others resurrected the local women's
36 suffrage movement in the early 20th century and led Washington women
37 to voting victory using the strategy of a calm and direct approach
38 using campaigning posters, penny postcards and cookbooks in their
39 campaigns; and

1 WHEREAS, On November 8, 1910, men voted in favor of women's
2 suffrage 52,299 to 29,676, a nearly two-to-one margin, making
3 Washington the first state in the 20th century and the fifth state in
4 the Union to enfranchise women; and

5 WHEREAS, This new Washington state constitutional provision,
6 however, did not in itself authorize all women to vote, because two
7 other factors blocked this right; (1) It authorized voting only for
8 those who could read and speak English; and (2) many women, including
9 immigrant Asians and Native Americans, were subject to other
10 restrictive citizenship laws which denied the right to vote; and

11 WHEREAS, After women's suffrage was achieved in Washington in
12 1910, Washington women worked tirelessly to extend the woman's right
13 to vote nationwide through astute political organizing, private
14 persuasion, and mass action; and

15 WHEREAS, Carrie Chapman Catt, who lived in Seattle and founded
16 the Woman's Century Club there, was a leader in the national movement
17 and met with President Woodrow Wilson to secure his support for
18 suffrage in light of women's contributions during World War I; and

19 WHEREAS, Washington's Emma Smith DeVoe founded the first national
20 organization of voting women, the National Council of Women Voters,
21 headquartered in Tacoma, which was the forerunner of the League of
22 Women Voters; and

23 WHEREAS, In June 1919 Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the
24 United States Constitution and sent it to the state Legislatures for
25 ratification, requiring thirty-six states to ratify it; and

26 WHEREAS, On March 22, 1920, the Washington State Legislature
27 unanimously ratified the 19th Amendment to the United States
28 Constitution; and

29 WHEREAS, On August 26, 1920, the last of the necessary thirty-six
30 states ratified the 19th Amendment, thus enfranchising nearly half of
31 the United States adult population; and

32 WHEREAS, The passionate, extended fight for women's suffrage,
33 from the first women's rights convention in 1848 to national
34 enfranchisement in 1920, lasted 72 years, with women from all walks
35 of life, political views, and demographic backgrounds asking for the
36 right to voice their opinions at the polls; and

37 WHEREAS, Washington women by the thousands advocated for the
38 right to vote—in parades, picketing, in newspapers, and in the state
39 and federal capitols; and

1 WHEREAS, Daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters of
2 the women who fought so hard to vote have been making their voices
3 heard at the polls for over one hundred years in Washington state and
4 nearly one hundred years nationwide; and

5 WHEREAS, Most of the women who worked for the right to vote did
6 not live to see the success of enfranchisement of women; and

7 WHEREAS, In contemporary times, women are running for office in
8 unprecedented numbers, with many current politicians, both male and
9 female, keeping in mind that they follow in the footsteps of these
10 great suffragists; and

11 WHEREAS, Many of the women and men who worked for Woman Suffrage
12 in Washington Territory and then Washington state from 1854 to 1920
13 deserve recognition for their efforts and triumph;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Washington State House of
15 Representatives that we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the
16 Washington State Legislature ratifying the 19th Amendment, and
17 encourage accompanying celebrations throughout the state.

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