

SENATE RESOLUTION

8670

By Senators Becker, Wellman, Saldaña, Salomon, Hunt, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Hasegawa, Conway, Hobbs, Wilson, C., Kuderer, Frockt, Liias, Fortunato, Hawkins, Short, King, McCoy, Darneille, Van De Wege, Randall, Mullet, Dhingra, Cleveland, Carlyle, Warnick, Das, Zeiger, Ericksen, Rolfes, Wagoner, Muzzall, Sheldon, Honeyford, Walsh, Keiser, Padden, Rivers, O'Ban, Stanford, Billig, and Brown

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
2 was not widely embraced and women were routinely turned away at
3 the polls; and

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

9 WHEREAS, In 1871 Pacific Northwest women's rights leader
10 Abigail Scott Duniway organized a speaking tour with national
11 suffrage movement leader Susan B. Anthony through Washington
12 Territory to 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
17 an anti-suffrage law declaring that women could not vote until
18 Congress 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
23 women's suffrage, African American women in Washington Territory
24 became some of the first to have voting rights in the country;
25 and

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

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

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

35 WHEREAS, Washington women leaders such as Emma Smith DeVoe
36 and May Arkwright Hutton and many others resurrected the local
37 women's suffrage movement in the early 20th century and led
38 Washington women to voting victory using the strategy of a calm

1 and direct approach using campaigning posters, penny postcards
2 and cookbooks in their campaigns; and

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

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, Washington's Emma Smith DeVoe founded the first
24 national organization of voting women, the National Council of
25 Women Voters, headquartered in Tacoma, which was the forerunner
26 of the League of Women Voters; and

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

31 WHEREAS, On March 22, 1920, the Washington State Legislature
32 unanimously ratified the 19th Amendment to the United States
33 Constitution; and

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

1 WHEREAS, The passionate, extended fight for women's
2 suffrage, from the first women's rights convention in 1848 to
3 national enfranchisement in 1920, lasted 72 years, with women
4 from all walks of life, political views, and demographic
5 backgrounds asking for the right to voice their opinions at the
6 polls; and

7 WHEREAS, Washington women by the thousands advocated for the
8 right to vote—in parades, picketing, in newspapers, and in the
9 state and federal capitols; and

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

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

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

20 WHEREAS, Many of the women and men who worked for Woman
21 Suffrage in Washington Territory and then Washington state from
22 1854 to 1920 deserve recognition for their efforts and triumph;

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State
24 Senate celebrate February 13, 2020, as the 100th Anniversary of
25 the Washington State Legislature ratifying the 19th Amendment,
26 and encourage accompanying celebrations throughout the state;
27 and

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate
29 reaffirm its commitment to empowering and uplifting the voices
30 of women across our great state.

31 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,
32 do hereby certify that this is a true and
33 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8670,
34 adopted by the Senate
35 February 13, 2020

- 1 BRAD HENDRICKSON
- 2 Secretary of the Senate