

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY



What is Women's Equality Day?

Representative Bella Abzug (D-NY) successfully presented a bill recognizing August 26th as Women's Equality Day in 1971.

Women's Equality Day is a symbol of women's ongoing fight for equal rights, and the United States applauds and supports them, according to a section of the statute.¹

Today, we still honor the accomplishments of women's rights advocates and acknowledge the difficulties women face daily. Women's Equality Day is a chance to **reflect** on the history of women, to **inspire** and **encourage** women, and to keep in mind that despite significant progress, the fight for women's equality is far from being won.

From mothers and grandmothers to partners, sisters, and friends, all of us rely on dedicated women.

Spend some time thanking them for all the mental and emotional support.

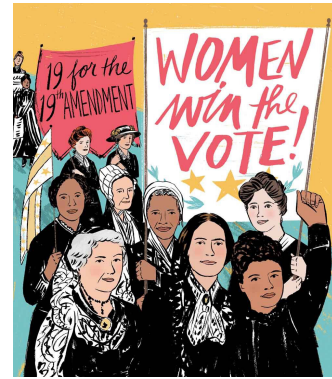
Four Interesting Facts About the Suffrage Movement

1. The suffrage movement began as a fight for broader rights. Women struggled to escape the laws of **coverture**, a legal theory that held that a woman's legal rights were dependent on her husband, before battling for the right to vote. Married women were not allowed to sign legal documents, possess property, or work in a genuine job under coverture.³

2. Suffragists' ideals were heavily influenced by Native American Women. Leading suffragists **Lucretia Mott**, **Matilda Joslyn Gage**, and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** visited, studied, recorded, and were increasingly influenced by the women of the six Native American nations known as the **Haudenosaunee Confederacy**, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy, throughout the majority of the 1800s because, "Native women had power beyond their wildest dreams."⁴ Women of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy possessed complete political and social equality, in contrast to women in Europe. This was evidence for suffragists that women's subjection was neither natural nor predetermined by God.⁴

3. The suffrage movement did not originally include all American women. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses that barred them from voting disadvantaged women of color, particularly African American women. Native American women were not included in the campaign for the right to vote, despite their influence on suffragist leaders. "American Indians did not become citizens of the United States until the **Indian Citizenship Act** was passed in 1924, and even then, they were denied the right to vote until the **Voting Rights Act of 1965** (VRA) was passed."^{4,3}

4. Women ran for office **BEFORE** they could vote. Before the passage of the **19th Amendment**, individual states decided if women could vote in local elections, but nothing was stopping them from running for political office, they could even run for President of the United States!



WOMEN WIN THE VOTE!: 19 FOR THE 19th AMENDMENT, AUTHOR: NANCY B. KENNEDY

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first woman to run for the US House of Representatives in 1866.

Victoria Woodhull ran for President of the United States in 1872.

Susanna Salter, an anti-alcohol campaigner, was chosen as Argonia, Kansas' first female mayor*.

*To humiliate Salter and deter other women from running for government, Salter's name was intentionally entered into the race. "The pranksters figured her imminent loss would end the matter of women in politics and the threat of prohibition."⁵ The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and pro-temperance voters, however, helped Susanna Salter win the race by a two-thirds majority!

Sources: 1. <https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/womens-equality-day>,

2 <https://nationaltoday.com/womens-equality-day/>, 3 <https://time.com/5372770/womens-equality-day-2018-facts/>,

4 <https://womensmediacenter.com/news-features/100-years-after-suffrage-native-american-women-still-fighting-to-vote>

5. <https://allthatsinteresting.com/susanna-salter>



UAW - Ford Diversity Digest
August 2023