



## Timeline of the Fight for US Women's Suffrage

- 1776** Abigail Adams, wife of founding father John Adams, asked her husband and others working on the Declaration of Independence to "Remember the Ladies." John responded humorously, saying that the Declaration's wording specifies that "all men are created equal."
- 1837** In May, black and white attendees of a female antislavery society convention in New York City called for women's suffrage.
- 1840** Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, along with other female delegates, were relegated to the balcony and denied the right to vote at a British antislavery conference in London, England. Stanton and Mott vowed to instigate a U.S. women's rights movement with female suffrage as a plank.
- 1848** Attendees at the first US women's rights convention, convened by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott at Seneca Falls, New York, crafted a "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" outlining issues and goals for the emerging women's movement, including women's suffrage. The suffrage plank was highly contentious among attendees. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton made the motion, a hush fell over the 300 women delegates. A male, Frederick Douglass, seconded the motion. And the plank barely squeaked through.
- 1851** Sojourner Truth, a former slave, delivered her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio.
- 1866** Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage. Elizabeth Cady Stanton presented a petition to Congress demanding the vote for women.
- 1867** Despite AERA advocacy, efforts to enact women's suffrage in New York state and Kansas failed.
- 1868** Disagreements over the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the impending 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment caused a split in the women's right movement. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the more radical, New York-based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe organized the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), based in Boston. Wyoming Territory granted suffrage to women.
- 1869** Utah Territory granted suffrage to women.
- 1870** Adoption of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment excluded women from the vote.
- 1871** Victoria Woodhull addressed the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, arguing that women have the right to vote under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The committee issued a negative report.
- 1872** Susan B. Anthony was arrested in Rochester, New York, for "knowingly voting without the lawful right to vote." At the same time, Sojourner Truth appeared at a polling station in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and demanded a ballot. She was turned away.
- 1874** In *Minor v. Happersett*, the US Supreme Court ruled that the US Constitution does not confer the right of suffrage upon anyone – and that the constitution and laws of states that grant suffrage only to men are not void under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- 1878** A Woman Suffrage Amendment was introduced in the US Congress. The wording was unchanged in 1919, when the amendment finally passed both houses.

- 1880** New York state granted school suffrage to women.
- 1882** The US House of Representatives and the Senate appointed Select Committees on Woman Suffrage.
- 1890** NWSA and AWSA reunited as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Wyoming joined the union as the first state with voting rights for women. By 1900 women also had full suffrage in Utah, Colorado, and Idaho.
- 1892** Elizabeth Cady Stanton resigned as president of NAWSA, with Susan B. Anthony assuming the presidency.
- 1895** After Elizabeth Cady Stanton published *The Woman's Bible*, NAWSA put distance between her and the organization, fearing her to be too radical and thus damaging to the suffrage movement.
- 1900** Susan B. Anthony resigned the NAWSA presidency, which Carrie Chapman Catt assumed.
- 1903** Mary Dreier, Rheta Childe Dorr, Leonora O'Reilly, and others formed the Women's Trade Union League, an organization of middle- and working-class women dedicated to unionization for working women and to woman suffrage. This group later became the nucleus of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). Carrie Chapman Catt resigned as NAWSA president, and Anna Howard Shaw assumed the position.
- 1911** The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) formed. Led by Mrs. Arthur Dodge, its members included wealthy, influential women and some Catholic clergymen, including Cardinal Gibbons.
- 1912** Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party became the first national political party to support suffrage for women. Women's suffrage referenda passed in Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon.
- 1913** Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organized a major suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. on Woodrow Wilson's inauguration day, attended by over 5,000 women. The mistreatment of the marchers by the crowd and the police led to a great public outcry, and the event was a great media coup for the suffrage movement.
- 1914** Montana and Nevada granted voting rights to women. Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organized the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage.
- 1915** New York state voted against the women's suffrage referendum. Carrie Chapman Catt became the NAWSA president.
- 1916** NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt unveiled a state-by-state plan to gain woman suffrage. Alice Paul split with NAWSA in disagreement and founded the National Woman's Party (NWP) intending to win a national suffrage amendment by targeting Congress and the White House with a strategy of sustained, dramatic, nonviolent protest.
- 1917-1919** NWP staged daily protests at the White House. Many women were arrested for "obstructing traffic," particularly during World War I. Jailed suffragists went on hunger strike and were force fed. In 1917 women won the right to vote in North Dakota, Ohio, Indiana, Rhode Island, Nebraska, Michigan, New York, and Arkansas.
- 1920** Henry Burn casted the deciding vote, making Tennessee the 36<sup>th</sup> and final state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, granting women's suffrage as of August 26. NAWSA ceased to exist after its mission was accomplished, but the organization became the nucleus of the League of Women Voters.

**BUT. . .** Asian American women, if born in the U.S., could vote after 1920. But if they were foreign-born, they were ineligible for US citizenship until after World War II. Under the Cable Act of 1922, if an Asian American female US citizen married a foreign-born Asian American man, then she lost her US citizenship and right to vote. (The Cable Act was repealed in 1931.) Native American women and men were denied US citizenship until 1924. African American women and men in the South were not allowed to register to vote until passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

