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| **Timeline for Women's Rights** | |
| **1777** | |
|  | The original 13 states pass laws that prohibit women from voting. Abigail Smith Adams, wife of John Adams, the second president, and mother of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president, writes that women "will not hold ourselves bound by any laws which we have no voice." *(Digital History ID 2267)* |
| **1826** | |
|  | The first public high schools for girls open in New York and Boston. The American Journal of Education wrote that the school should give "women such an education as shall make them fit wives for well educated men, and enable them to exert a salutary influence upon the rising generation." *(Digital History ID 2268)* |
| **1833** | |
|  | Oberlin College in Ohio, becomes the first co-educational college in the U.S. when it opened. The Oberlin Collegiate Institute held as one of its primary objectives: "the elevation of the female character, bringing within the reach of the misjudge and neglected sex, all the instructive privileges which hitherto have unreasonably distinguished the leading sex from theirs." While women took courses with men, they pursued diplomas from the Ladies Course. Three women graduated in 1841.*(Digital History ID 2269)* |
| (9/02) | Oberlin College is founded in Ohio. Becomes the first college to admit African Americans and women. The Oberlin Collegiate Institute held as one of its primary objectives: "the elevation of the female character, bringing within the reach of the misjudge and neglected sex, all the instructive privileges which hitherto have unreasonably distinguished the leading sex from theirs." While women took courses with men, they pursued diplomas from the Ladies Course. Three women graduated in 1841. *(Digital History ID 283)* |
| **1837** | |
| (11/08) | Mount Holyoke Female Seminary is established in South Hadley, Massachusetts by Mary Lyon as the first college for women. *(Digital History ID 637)* |
| (11/08) | Mount Holyoke Female Seminary is established in Massachusetts by Mary Lyon as the first college for women. *(Digital History ID 2270)* |
| **1849** | |
| (01/23) | Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States from Geneva College in New York. For the first time, women are permitted to practice medicine legally. *(Digital History ID 2244)* |
| **1850** | |
| (10/23) | The first National Women’s Rights Convention is held in Worcester, Massachusetts, attracting more than 1,000 participants. National conventions continue to be held yearly (except for 1857) through 1860. *(Digital History ID 1097)* |
| **1869** | |
| (11/23) | Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, and others form the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA)that focuses exclusively on gaining voting rights for women through amedments to individual state constitutions. The organization protested the confrontational tactics of the National Woman Suffrage Association and tied itself closely to the Republican Party while concentrating solely on securing the vote for women state by state. *(Digital History ID 2228)* |
| (12/10) | The First Legislative Assembly of the territory of Wyoming grants women, over the age of 21, the right to vote and to hold political office. Wyoming becomes the first state to grant women the right to vote when it becomes a state in 1890.*(Digital History ID 1163)* |
| (5/15) | Susan Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton form the National Woman Suffrage Association with the primary goal to achieve voting rights for women through a Congressional amendment to the US Constitution. *(Digital History ID 2227)* |
| **1870** | |
| (02/03) | The 15th Amendment, one of three Amendments passed in response to the Civil War, prohibits the federal government or the state from denying citizens the right to vote based on “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Although the Fifteenth Amendment does not specifically prohibit women from voting, it does not specifically guarantee them the right either. Approximately 150 women attempt to vote in 1870, including the Grimke sisters in Boston, Sojourner Truth in Battle Creek, Michigan, and Matilda Joselyn Gage in New York. While states begin to liberalize their laws as early as 1893, the right of all women to vote will not officially become law until ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment on August 18, 1920. *(Digital History ID 2245)* |
| (03/08) | A Wyoming Court swears in the first panel of female Grand Jurors, finding that their service will "give them the best possible opportunities to aid in suppressing the dens of infamy which curse the country." *(Digital History ID 2246)* |
| **1871** | |
| (11/08) | Victoria Chaflin Woodhull is nominated as the candidate of the Equal Rights party, the first woman to run for President of the United States. Neither she nor any other woman in the country is allowed to cast a vote for her. *(Digital History ID* |
| **1872** | |
| (12/26) | Susan B. Anthony casts her first vote as an attempt to test whether the Fourteenth Amendment would be interpreted broadly to guarantee women the right to vote. She was tried in June 17-18, 1873 in Canandaigua, New York and found guilty of "unlawful voting." *(Digital History ID 2248)* |
| **1873** | |
| (04/15) | In Bradwell v. Illinois , the U.S. Supreme Court rules that the state of Illinois has the right to exclude a woman, Myra Colby Bradwell, from practicing law. Three justices sign onto an opinion that says, "[t]he paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator." *(Digital History ID 2249)* |
| **1874** | |
|  | On October 15, 1872, Virginia Minor applied to register to vote in Missouri. The registrar, Reese Happersett, turned down the application, because the Missouri state constitution read: "Every male citizen of the United States shall be entitled to vote." Mrs. Minor sued in Missouri state court, claiming her rights were violated on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment. She argues that the 14th Amendment’s privileges and immunities clause must be interpreted to guarantee her a right to vote. However the Supreme Court rules that while women are "persons" under the Fourteenth Amendment that they are a special category of "non-voting" citizens and that states remain free to grant or deny women the right to vote. *(Digital History ID 2250)* |
| **1878** | |
|  | The Susan B. Anthony Amendment, to guarantee women the right to vote, is first introduced in the U.S. Congress. Congress refuses to act on her proposed amendment. Anthony continues to appear before every Congress from 1869 to 1906 to ask for passage of a voting rights amendment. *(Digital History ID 2251)* |
| **1890** | |
|  | After several years of negotiations, the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Now the women's movement main organization, NAWSA works to obtain voting rights for women. *(Digital History ID 2229)* |
| **1893** | |
| (04/07) | Colorado is the first state to adopt an amendment giving women the right to vote. *(Digital History ID 473)* |
| **1896** | |
|  | The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) is organized in Washington D.C. at the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church. The organization's founders included some of the most renowned African-American women educators, community leaders, and civil-rights activists in America. *(Digital History ID 2230)* |
| **1903** | |
| (11/14) | Based on a similar organization in Britain, the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) is founded at the convention of the American Federation of Labor in Boston, when it became clear that American labor had no intention of organizing America's women into trade unions.The goals of the WTUL are to secure better occupational conditions and improved wages for women as well as to encourage women to join the labor movement. Local branches are quickly established in Boston, Chicago and New York. *(Digital History ID 2231)* |
| **1908** | |
| (02/24) | In 1903, Oregon passed a law limiting the number of hours a woman could work in a laundry to ten hours a day. Laundry owner Curt Muller sued, claiming that the law was an unconstitutional violation of employers’ "liberty to contract" with employees. In Muller v. State of Oregon, the court ruled 9-0 that the law was constitutional. Although seemingly a victory for women workers in that it improved their working conditions, the decision proved to be a setback in the drive toward equality because men faced none of the same limits and because women needed special protection that their male counterparts did not need.*(Digital History ID 2252)* |
| **1913** | |
|  | The Congressional Union for Women Suffrage (CUWS) is formed to work toward the passage of a federal amendment to give women the right to vote. CUWS attempted to introduce the militant methods used by the Women's Social and Political Union in Britain, and controversial tactics included organizing huge demonstrations and the daily picketing of the White House. Over the next few years the police arrested nearly 500 women for loitering and 168 were jailed for "obstructing traffic". In 1916 CUWS becomes the National Woman's Party. *(Digital History ID 2232)* |
| **1915** | |
|  | Suffragists from the western states drive across the country to support voting rights for women in the east. Twelve western states had already granted women the right to vote in state elections. Their leader was Oregonian Sara Bard Field, a member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). A petition with 500,000 signatures in support of an amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote is given to President Woodrow Wilson. *(Digital History ID 2253)* |
| (10/23) | 25,000 women march in New York City, demanding the right to vote. *(Digital History ID 1098)* |
| **1916** | |
| (11/07) | Republican Jeannette Rankin of Montana is the first women to serve in either branch of Congress. She is elected at a time when women in most states are still not allowed to vote.  [Learn more...](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3209" \t "_blank) *(Digital History ID 159)* |
| **1919** | |
|  | The federal woman suffrage amendment is passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is sent to the states for ratification. The National Woman's Party begins a campaign to obtain ratification of 19th Amendment by 36 state legislatures - the required three-fourths majority at the time. *(Digital History ID 2233)* |
| **1920** | |
| (06/05) | The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor is formed by Congress "to formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable, employment." *(Digital History ID 2234)* |
| (08/18) | 19th Amendment to the US Constitution is ratified, granting women the right to vote. [Learn more...](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3207" \t "_blank) *(Digital History ID 152)* |
| **1921** | |
| (11/10) | Margaret Sanger founds the American Birth Control League (ABCL), which evolves into the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 1942. The ABCL focuses on disseminating birth control information to doctors, social workers, women's clubs, and the scientific community, as well as to thousands of individual women; fosters the development of state and local birth control leagues and clinics; and lobbies at the state and national level for birth control legislation. *(Digital History ID 2235)* |
| **1922** | |
| (11/21) | Rebecca L. Felton of Georgia is sworn in as the first woman to serve in the US Senate. She only serves one day. *(Digital History ID 670)* |
| **1931** | |
| (12/10) | Jane Addams becomes the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. *(Digital History ID 1166)* |
| **1932** | |
| (01/12) | Hattie W. Caraway of Arkansas becomes the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate. Rebecca Felton of Georgia had previously been appointed to the Senate but had served one day. *(Digital History ID 469)* |
| **1933** | |
| (03/03) | Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins becomes the first woman cabinet officer.*(Digital History ID 615)* |
| **1935** | |
|  | Mary McLeod Bethune, Advisor of Minority Affairs to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, organizes the National Council of Negro Women, a coalition of black women's groups that lobbies against job discrimination, racism, and sexism and functions as a clearinghouse, facilitating networking and coalition-building, and advocating the use of collective power on issues affecting women, their families and communities. *(Digital History ID 2236)* |
| **1936** | |
| (12/07) | The federal law prohibiting the dissemination of contraceptive information through the mail is modified, and birth control information is no longer classified as obscene. The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second District renders an historic decision in U.S. v. One Package and asserts the rights of the physician in the legitimate use of contraceptives and eradicated the restrictions prohibiting the importation, sale or carriage by mail of contraceptive materials and information for medical purposes. *(Digital History ID 2237)* |
| **1960** | |
| (05/09) | The Food and Drug Administration approves the birth control pill as safe for women to use. *(Digital History ID 577)* |
| **1961** | |
| (12/14) | President John Kennedy establishes the President's Commission on the Status of Women to explore issues relating to women and to make proposals in such areas as employment policy, education, and federal Social Security and tax laws relating to women. Kennedy appointed Eleanor Roosevelt, former US delegate to the United Nations and widow of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to chair the commission The report issued by the Commission in 1963 documents substantial discrimination against women in the workplace and makes specific recommendations for improvement, including fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable child care. *(Digital History ID 2238)* |
| **1963** | |
| (02/25) | Betty Friedan publishes her highly influential book,*The Feminine Mystique* which describes the dissatisfaction felt my middle-class American housewives with the narrow role imposed on them by society. the book immediately becomes a best seller. According to *The New York Times* obituary of Friedan in 2006, it "ignited the contemporary women's movement in 1963 and as a result permanently transformed the social fabric of the United States and countries around the world" and "is widely regarded as one of the most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century." [Learn more...](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3339" \t "_blank) *(Digital History ID 83)* |
| (06/10) | Congress passes the Equal Pay Act, an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, requiring employers to pay all employees equally for equal work, regardless of their gender. The act prohibits unequal pay for equal or substantially equal work performed by men and women in the same establishment who are performing under similar working conditions. *(Digital History ID 2239)* |
| **1966** | |
| (06/28) | National Organization for Women (NOW) is formed by a group of feminists including Betty Friedan while attending the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women. It becomes the largest women's rights group in the United States, and begins working to end sexual discrimination, especially in the workplace, by means of legislative lobbying, litigation, and public demonstrations. [Learn more...](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3341" \t "_blank) *(Digital History ID 77)* |
| **1967** | |
| (10/13) | Executive Order 11375 (amending Executive Order 11246) expands President Lyndon Johnson's affirmative action policy of 1965 to cover discrimination based on gender. As a result, federal agencies and contractors must take active measures to ensure that women as well as minorities enjoy the same educational and employment opportunities as white males. *(Digital History ID 2240)* |
| **1968** | |
| (08/05) | The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issues revised guidelines on sex discrimination, making it clear that the widespread practice of publishing "help wanted" advertisements that use "male" and "female" column headings violates Title VII. This ruling is upheld in 1973 by the Supreme Court, and opens the way for women to apply for higher-paying jobs hitherto open only to men. *(Digital History ID 2241)* |
| **1972** | |
| (03/22) | Congress sends the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution to the states for ratification. Originally drafted by Alice Paul in 1923, the amendment reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Congress places a seven year deadline on the ratification process, and although the deadline extends until 1982, the amendment does not receive enough state ratifications. It is still not part of the U.S. Constitution. *(Digital History ID 817)* |
| (06/23) | Title IX of the Education Amendments bans sex discrimination in schools. It states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." As a result of Title IX, the enrollment of women in athletics programs and professional schools increases dramatically. *(Digital History ID 2242)* |
| **1978** | |
|  | The Pregnancy Discrimination Act amends the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and bans employment discrimination against pregnant women. Under the Act, a woman cannot be fired or denied a job or a promotion because she is or may become pregnant, nor can she be forced to take a pregnancy leave if she is willing and able to work. *(Digital History ID 2243)* |
| **1981** | |
| (09/21) | The U.S. Senate votes unanimously to confirm Sandra Day O’Connor as the first woman Supreme Court Justice. She was nominated by President Ronald Reagan.*(Digital History ID 118)* |
| **1984** | |
| (07/12) | Geraldine Ferraro is nominated as first female vice presidential candidate by the Democratic presidential candidate, Walter Mondale.  [Learn more...](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3371" \t "_blank) *(Digital History ID 111)* |