

---

## *Women's Suffrage* was a fight to win the right to vote in the

United States. It took activists nearly 100 years to win that right, and the campaign was not easy. The campaign began during the late 1820s and 30s. During this time, many other reform groups were accumulating all across the country. These groups included religious groups, anti-slavery groups, and moral reform societies. In many of those groups, women played a vital role. As these groups were receiving more attention, women were put under a stereotype that, according to historians, "true" women were pious, submissive, and only concerned with their family. This contributed to a new way of thinking about what it meant to be a woman and a citizen of the US.

In 1848, a group of abolitionists gathered together to discuss the problem of women's rights. During the 1850s, the women's rights movement gathered some steam, but slowly lost impulse due to the Civil War. In 1868, the 14th amendment ratified and extended the Constitution's protection to all citizens referring to the "citizens" as "male". Women's suffrage advocates believed this was their chance to push lawmakers for universal suffrage but it was denied. In 1869, the National Woman's Suffrage Association was formed by Elizabeth Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. That same year, abolitionist Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell founded the American Woman Suffrage Association. The AWSA believed women enfranchisement could be gained by amendments to individual state constitutions. In 1869, Wyoming granted all-female residents ages 21 and older to vote. By 1878, the NWSA lobbied the United States Congress for a constitutional amendment. Congress debated with the House of Representatives and the Senate, but in 1886 it was defeated when it reached the Senate floor. In 1890, the 2 groups merged to form NAWSA. The new strategy was to lobby on a state-by-state basis. Within six years, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho adopted amendments to their state constitution, allowing women to vote.

As the fight for voting rights continued, black women in the suffrage movement continued to face racial discrimination from other white suffragists. As a result, black suffragists founded their own groups, including the National Association of Colored Women Clubs. Between 1910 and 1918, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington extended voting rights to women. On the eve of the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson in 1913, protesters gathered together for a massive suffrage parade in the nation's capital. On May 21, 1919, a US Representative proposed the House resolution to approve the Susan Anthony Amendment granting women the right to vote. The measure passed the House 304 to 89—a full 42 votes above the required two-thirds

---

majority. Two weeks later, on June 4, 1919, the U.S Senate passed the 19th Amendment. The amendment was later sent to the states for ratification. By March of the following year, a total of 35 states had approved the amendment. Southern states were opposed to the amendment, however, and seven of them— Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia—had already rejected it before Tennessee's vote on August 18, 1920. It was up to Tennessee's Representative (Harry T. Burn) to cast the deciding vote. As a result, the 19th amendment was fully ratified.