



Marquee Documents

19th Amendment Ratification

When we shall have our amendment [for woman suffrage] . . . everybody will think it was always so . . . They have no idea of how every single inch of ground that she stands upon today has been gained by the hard work of some little handful of women of the past.

—Susan B. Anthony, speech at the National-American Convention, 1894

In the 1860s, supporters for woman suffrage began to pressure Congress for the right to vote. The first woman suffrage amendment was introduced in Congress in 1878, and for the next 40 years it was reintroduced regularly, becoming popularly known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Finally, in 1919 Congress passed the 19th Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote, which three-fourths of the states ratified by August 18, 1920.

From the first state ratification in Wyoming to the 36th ratification in Tennessee, Marquee Documents offers your organization the opportunity to tell this powerful story of how the 19th Amendment profoundly changed the electorate. Wyoming, Missouri, Minnesota, Illinois, Tennessee . . . these state ratification documents stand alone as representative of a critical moment in American history.



Exhibition Details

Content:

Original document; text panel, two text pylons, audiovisual pylon, exhibit case, and interpretive materials.

Curator:

Jennifer N. Johnson, National Archives
Traveling Exhibits Service (NATES)

Supplemental Materials:

Educational and promotional resources, including an education and resource guide, marketing resources, installation assistance, and exhibit-related products through the National Archives Store.

Rental Fee:

\$150,000 for 4-8-week display, depending on the original document

Security Requirements:

High security and environmental controls. Exhibit bookings are subject to archival and conservation review.

Shipping:

Shipping is included in the fee

Size:

200 square feet, 24' wide x 8' deep

Number of Crates:

4

Insurance:

Exhibitor must provide insurance under an all-risk wall-to-wall fine arts policy.

Tour Dates:

Marquee Documents is available for hosting through 2021. Dates are subject to change.

Project Status:

On the road

More About Ratifying the 19th Amendment

The 19th amendment guarantees American women the right to vote. Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution. Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920.

Between 1878, when the amendment was first introduced in Congress, and August 18, 1920, when it was ratified, champions of voting rights for women worked tirelessly, but strategies for achieving their goal varied. Some pursued a strategy of passing suffrage acts in each state—nine western states adopted woman suffrage legislation by 1912. Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts. Militant suffragists used tactics such as parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes. Often supporters met fierce resistance. Opponents heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused them.

By 1916, almost all of the major suffrage organizations were united behind the goal of a constitutional amendment. When New York adopted woman suffrage in 1917 and President Wilson changed his position to support an amendment in 1918, the political balance began to shift.

On May 21, 1919, the House of Representatives passed the amendment, and 2 weeks later, the Senate followed. When Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment on August 18, 1920, the amendment passed its final hurdle of obtaining the agreement of three-fourths of the states. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification on August 26, 1920, forever changing the face of the American electorate.

National Archives Traveling Exhibits Service

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