



Solano County

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Legislation Text

File #: 20-510, Version: 1

Adopt and present a resolution honoring the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote for the month of August 2020 (Chairwoman Hannigan)

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

Supervisor Hannigan requests the Board of Supervisors recognizes the month of August 2020 as the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote.

SUMMARY:

The 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, was ratified on August 18, 1920, by two-thirds majority. The Solano Commission for Women and Girls (SCWG) is requesting the Board of Supervisors proclaim August 2020 as *Women's Right to Vote* month.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The costs associated with preparing the agenda item are nominal and absorbed by the department's FY2020/21 Preliminary Budget. The costs associated with preparation and purchase of the resolution materials are included in the Board's FY2020/21 Preliminary Budget.

DISCUSSION:

The 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote in the United States, was ratified on August 18th, 1920, and unceremoniously signed into law on August 26th, 1920 by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby. The amendment was a culmination of more than 70 years of struggle and protest by women suffragists.

The Women's Suffrage movement started in July 1848 at the first women's rights convention in the United States, known as the Seneca Falls Convention. The convention had 300 attendees, including about 40 men - most notably Fredrick Douglas - and focused on the social, civil and religious rights of women.

The goals and purpose of the convention was best articulated by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the meeting's organizers when she said: *"We are assembled to protest against a form of government, existing without the consent of the governed-to declare our right to be free as man is free, to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support, to have such disgraceful laws as give man the power to chastise and imprison his wife, to take the wages which she earns, the property which she inherits, and, in case of separation, the children of her love."*

After the Seneca Falls convention, a National Women's Rights Convention was established in 1950 and held annually thereafter to advance the rights of women.

Voting rights in the United States was largely restricted to white male property owners in the 1770's. The 15th

Amendment was ratified in 1870 which ensured that people could not be denied the right to vote because of their race. While the 15th Amendment expanded voting rights to African American men, women were still denied the right to vote; and many states, particularly in the South, used a variety of policies and practices (e.g., poll taxes, literacy tests) to suppress voting among African American men.

In 1920 women won the right to vote. This historic achievement was but one step in the long battle for voters' rights in this country. Voter suppression tactics continued in many states, targeting men and women of color, and low-income whites. Further advancements included:

- 1) The 24th amendment, ratified in 1964, which stated that "the rights of citizens... shall not be denied or abridged by the United States by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax".
- 2) The 1965 Voter's Rights Act which prohibited States from using policies and practices to suppress voters.
- 3) The 1975 expansion of the Voting Rights Act to protect language minorities: and
- 4) The 1982 expansion of the Voting Rights Act to make voting more accessible for the elderly and people with disabilities.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board of Supervisors could choose not to proclaim August 2020 as Women's Right to Vote month, however this is not recommended, as this is a major anniversary in the history of woman's right to vote.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

No other agency involvement.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION