



Philadelphia women have long led the charge to expand voting rights. After decades of activism, women won the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment in August 1920. But many women were excluded. The fight continues.



**“We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul.”**

**—Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1866**

Black and white print portrait of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

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### **Abigail Adams letter to John Adams: March 13, 1776**

“I long to hear that you have declared an independency . . . . I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors . . . .

If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

Color portrait painting of Abigail Adams by Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828). Abigail Smith Adams (Mrs. John Adams), oil on canvas, Washington DC, National Gallery of Art

Abigail Adams (1744–1818), Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams [page 2], manuscript letter, Braintree, MA, 31 March–5 April 1776, Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society

# Certain Unalienable Rights

**“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”**

The Declaration of Independence nobly proclaims inalienable rights—fundamental human freedoms which can never be taken away. Yet in practice many have been excluded from its protections. Just prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Abigail Adams urged her husband John to “remember the ladies,” but it would take decades for U.S. women to gain political rights. Nationally, women won the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment, yet voter suppression continued to keep many women from the polls.



We hold these Truths to be self-evident,

Engraving by Edwin Austin Abbey (1852–1911), Reading the Declaration of Independence by John Nixon, from the steps of Independence Hall, Philadelphia, July 8, 1776, 1 print; wood engraving, illustrated in Harper's Weekly, July 15, 1866, p. 573, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

## Who is included?

This 1876 print depicts the celebratory moment when Colonel John Nixon read aloud the newly adopted Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in July 1776. The scene is notable for all those who are not represented. A lone woman selling wares sits downcast at the margins, suggesting she hasn't heard much that will improve her position. Indigenous Lenape people and enslaved or free Black people are entirely absent. These exclusions from the artist's rendering reveal inequalities present at our nation's founding.

## 1776



Declaration of Independence Print, In Congress, July 4, 1776, a declaration by the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled. 1 sheet; 47 × 38 cm., Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap, 1776, Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division

## Rooted in Abolitionism

Suffrage associations grew out of the organized foundations laid by multiracial and mixed gender abolitionist groups. Philadelphia women such as members of the Forten and Purvis families, Lucretia Mott, Mary Grew, and Sarah Mapps Douglass were all founding members of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which boycotted goods made by enslaved labor, directly aided freedom seekers, raised funds, and circulated petitions, all important organizing strategies for women in an era of limited female agency. These and other abolitionist actions, such as publishing persuasive pamphlets, petitioning Congress, organizing conventions, and, indeed, facing down violent opposition, would be used by later suffragists.



Lithograph by Frederick Gutekunst (1831–1917), A Group of Philadelphia Abolitionists with Lucretia Mott, offset lithograph, Philadelphia, ca. 1840s, National American Woman Suffrage Association Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

## 1851

Executive committee group portrait of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, including:

### **Mary Grew (1813–1896)**

Will go on to become a founder and President of the Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association

### **Robert Purvis (1810–1898)**

Purvis and his spouse Harriet Forten Purvis (1810–1875) helped establish the Philadelphia Suffrage Association and worked tirelessly for abolition.

### **Lucretia Mott (1793–1880)**

A Quaker reformer and minister, Mott helped organize the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, NY, in 1848, together with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She will

go on to serve as President of the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), founded in 1866.

In 1876, signs the Declaration of Rights for Women

### **Sarah Pugh (1800–1884)**

## **Violent Opposition**



Lithograph by John Caspar Wild (ca. 1804–1846), Destruction by Fire of Pennsylvania Hall..., hand-colored lithograph; 29 × 35 cm., Philadelphia: John T. Bowen (ca. 1801–1856) printer and publisher, 1838, Library Company of Philadelphia

In 1838, the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society built Pennsylvania Hall, only to see it burned to the ground four days later by a mob enraged by abolitionist sentiment and the multiracial and mixed gender meetings held within. Abolitionists continued to work together even when faced with the violent opposition that attempted to uphold the institution of slavery and the strict race and gender segregation of the day.



Butterfly watercolor by Sarah Mapps Douglass (1806–1882), A token of love from me, to thee, watercolor and gouache; 9.5 × 7.25 in., Philadelphia, ca. 1833, Library Company of Philadelphia

## **Sarah Mapps Douglass**

Sarah Mapps Douglass’s painted images are among the earliest signed examples of artwork by a Black woman. She was Treasurer for the 1838 Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, a meeting held in Pennsylvania Hall just prior to its burning. She and her mother, Grace Bustill Douglass, were among the founders of the multiracial Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, notable for the many Black women who served in leadership and executive positions. As a means to raise funds and awareness for the cause, they sold brass tokens featuring a kneeling female figure who asks, “Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?”



Round image of Am I Not A Woman & A Sister, anti-slavery token, brass; 1 3/16 inches (diameter), New Jersey, 1838, Library Company of Philadelphia

## The Fight for the Vote 1848–1890

**The passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 was preceded by generations of organizing.**



Engraving of Ye May session of ye woman's rights convention - ye orator of ye day denouncing ye lords of creation, wood engraving, illustrated in Harper's Weekly, v. 3, no. 128, June 11, 1859, p. 372, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

July 19–20, 1848

### The Seneca Falls Convention and Declaration of Sentiments

Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19th and 20th, 1848, proceedings and Declaration of Sentiments, published by John Dick, North Star office, Rochester, New York, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress

Reimagining the original Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Sentiments educates readers about gross inequalities, calling for equal pay for equal work, access to education and employment, property and divorce rights, and the right to vote.



Portrait by Frederick Gutekunst (1821–1917), Lucretia Mott, print; 6.5 × 4 in., Philadelphia, ca. 1870–1880, Records of the National Woman's Party, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Philadelphia Quakers and sisters Lucretia Mott and Martha Coffin Wright were two of the five organizers of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights convention.

Mott was inspired by the Indigenous Seneca Nation, in which women held political power.



Image of kneeling woman, Am I not a Woman and Sister, seal of the Philadelphia Female Anti Slavery Society, *The Liberator*, July 28, 1832, Boston, Mass., published by William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, Library Company of Philadelphia

1854

## Fifth National Women's Rights Convention in Philadelphia

Inspired by Seneca Falls, Philadelphia sisters Margaretta Forten, Sarah Louisa Forten Purvis, and Harriet Forten Purvis helped organize the Fifth National Women's Rights Convention in Philadelphia. The Forten Purvis women were prominent Black abolitionists and suffragists.



Portrait of Harriet Forten Purvis (1810–1875), ca. 1870s, illustration in *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, written by Ida Husted Harper, Indianapolis and Kansas City: The Bowen-Merrill Company, 1899, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress

Harriet Purvis was an experienced reformer, having operated an Underground Railroad station out of her family home at 9th and Lombard Streets, and with her sisters helping to form the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

1866

## American Equal Rights Association (AERA) formed at the National Women's Rights convention

This new multiracial and mixed gender organization battled on state and national legislative fronts for the enfranchisement of women and Black Americans. Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and Lucy Stone were members alongside many notable Philadelphia women. The group eventually splintered when some members support white women's voting rights at the expense of Black enfranchisement.



Portrait of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, illustration in *Women of Distinction: Remarkable in Works and Invincible in Character*, written by Josephine Turpin Washington (1861–1949) and Lawson Andrew Scruggs (1857–1914), Raleigh, N.C.: L. A. Scruggs, 1893, Schomburg



Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Poet, novelist, and leading reformer in abolition, temperance, and suffrage, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper spoke at the 1866 National Women's Rights Convention and underscored racism and her experience as a Black woman. This artist-activist lived at 10th and Bainbridge Streets in Philadelphia.

1868

14th Amendment ratified

All males, "being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime" should be able to vote.

1869

Divisions within the AERA led to the founding of two separate organizations: the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA)

National Woman Suffrage Association

Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, this women-only organization focused pressure on congress to adopt a Women's Suffrage Amendment, but did not support suffrage for Black men or Black women's rights and efforts. And yet, Hattie Purvis, Jr., daughter in a leading Black Philadelphia family of reformers, was the first Black Vice President of the NWSA.

American Woman Suffrage Association

A mixed gender organization led by Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe focused suffrage strategies on state rather than federal bodies. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper allied with this national group because of its support for voting rights for Black men.

1870

15th Amendment ratified

"[T]he right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It will take more than 100 years for this Amendment to be legally protected, and the struggle continues.

1878

Woman Suffrage Amendment first introduced in the United States Congress

The wording from the first proposed amendment is unchanged in 1919, when it finally passes both houses in preparation for the 1920 ratification and adoption.

1890

National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) founded, combining the resources of both the AWSA and NWSA.



Photo portrait by Charles Townley Chapman of Miss Jeannette Rankin, of Montana, speaking from the balcony of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Monday, April 2, 1917, records of the National Woman's Party, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

## Ballot Denied



Watercolor by Benjamin Ridgway Evans (1857–1891), East Side Broad Street, Callowhill to Wood, November, 1878, drawing and watercolor, Library Company of Philadelphia



Document titled Woman Suffrage: The Argument of Carrie S. Burnham before Chief Justice Reed, and Associate Justices Agnew, Sharswood and Mercur, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Carrie Burnham cast her ballot on October 10, 1871, at Thomas Rafferty’s liquor establishment located on the northeast corner of Broad and Wood streets in Philadelphia. Although her ballot and resulting appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court were denied, the record of her case was published and available for purchase at the Citizen’s Suffrage Association.

Dedicated to Burnham’s mother, the women of Pennsylvania, and all women who desire to be free, these court proceedings were reprinted to be educational and to raise funds in support of women’s suffrage.

Who exactly is considered a citizen of the United States, and what are their rights? Philadelphia’s own Carrie S. Burnham posed these questions before the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in 1873, and she wasn’t alone in asking such questions. In the early 1870s, she and other women attempted to vote, and when denied, welcomed court proceedings to appeal the decision and amplify their actions and arguments.

“What then is it to be a citizen of the United States; and what are the privileges and immunities of citizenship?”

# Carrie S. Burnham: 1838–1909



Portrait by Maylee Burgoon, illustration [2020] after portrait photograph of Caroline Burnham Kilgore, University of Pennsylvania Archives

**Carrie Burnham fought to extend voting rights to all women.**

**Who was the first person in your family to vote?**

## Fighting to be Heard

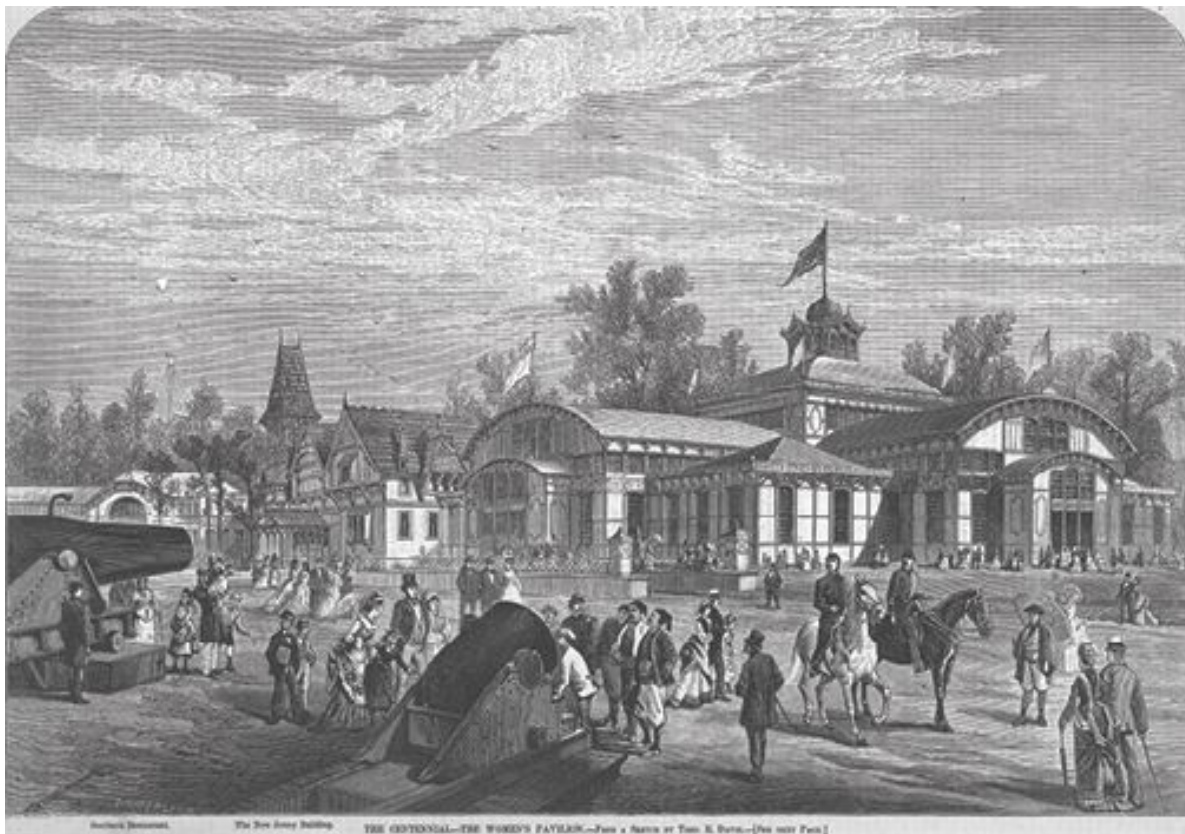


Image of The Centennial Women's Pavilion, from a sketch by Theo. R. Davis, Centennial Exhibition, 1876, Philadelphia Scrapbook, Free Library of Philadelphia

Signing petitions and declarations allowed women to have real and symbolic involvement in politics in an era of limited female agency.

The 1876 Declaration and Protest of the Women of the United States was signed by Black and white Philadelphians such as Lucretia Mott, Sarah Pugh, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Harriet Purvis. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) encouraged all allies to sign and yet were later found to have excluded signatures of 94 Black women who had sent their names in support.



Documents, National Woman Suffrage Association, Declaration and protest of the women of the United States July 4th, 1876, broadside, 4 p.; 28 × 21.5 cm., Philadelphia, 1876, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Printed Ephemera Collection, Library of Congress

## Centennial Disruptions

The 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Fairmount Park brought millions to Philadelphia, including noted leaders of the The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). By the 1870s, white and Black men could legally vote, but questions about who had access to the promises of U.S. citizenship remained. The Women's Building at the Exhibition highlighted women's progress and achievements; however, organizers moved suffrage displays out of view, prompting the NWSA to operate out of rented rooms at 1431 Chestnut Street for the duration of the fair.

### Storming the Stage



Richard Henry Lee reading the original document of the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July 1876, at Philadelphia, wood engraving, illustrated in *The Illustrated London News*, July 29, 1876, p. 109, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



Public relations portrait of Susan B. Anthony, ca. 1855, engraved by G.E. Perine & Co., NY, from History of Woman Suffrage by Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, vol. I, 1881

On July 4, 1876, thousands of Exhibition visitors descended on Independence Hall to hear Richard Henry Lee read the Declaration of Independence. Susan B. Anthony claimed a national spotlight for the suffrage movement when she stormed the stage, interrupted Lee's reading, and delivered The Declaration and Protest of the Women of the United States demanding justice, equality, legal identity, and suffrage for women.

## Suffrage and the Temperance Union

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) sought to limit liquor sales and saloons and drew connections between alcohol, unemployment, and violence, a particularly important issue for women who had few, if any, legal protections from abuse resulting from a husband's addiction. The WCTU endorsed woman suffrage in 1881.

More than 100,000 women with skills in public speaking, fundraising, and advocacy entered the fight for voting rights in 1881, when the Women's Christian Temperance Union endorsed woman suffrage.



Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Protect our American Youth by Prohibiting the Liquor Traffic, n.d., Special Collections and Archives, Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries



Women's Christian Temperance Union pledge card, courtesy of the Frances Willard House Museum and WCTU Archives



Portrait of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, illustration in *Women of Distinction: Remarkable in Works and Invincible in Character*, written by Josephine T. Washington (1861–1949) and L. A. Scruggs (1857–1914), Raleigh, N.C.: L. A. Scruggs, 1893, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Poet and reformer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was a longtime Philadelphian who worked in multi-racial circles for women’s suffrage, temperance, and other social reforms. She raised awareness about the impacts of sexism, classism, and anti-Black racism present in women’s movements, and lectured widely on the abolition of slavery. Harper was a founder of the American Woman’s Suffrage Association (AWSA) and Superintendent of the Department of Work Among the Colored People for the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

“The ballot in the hands of woman means power added to influence. How well she will use that power I can not foretell.”

## Frances Ellen Watkins Harper: 1825–1911



Portrait of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825–1911), illustrated in William Still, *The Underground Railroad*, Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872, p. 748

## **Songs for the People** **by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper**

Let me make the songs for the people,  
Songs for the old and young;  
Songs to stir like a battle-cry  
Wherever they are sung.  
Not for the clashing of sabres,  
For carnage nor for strife;  
But songs to thrill the hearts of men  
With more abundant life.  
Let me make the songs for the weary,  
Amid life's fever and fret,  
Till hearts shall relax their tension,  
And careworn brows forget.  
Let me sing for little children,  
Before their footsteps stray,  
Sweet anthems of love and duty,  
To float o'er life's highway.  
I would sing for the poor and aged,  
When shadows dim their sight;  
Of the bright and restful mansions,  
Where there shall be no night.  
Our world, so worn and weary,  
Needs music, pure and strong,  
To hush the jangle and discords



Of sorrow, pain, and wrong.  
Music to soothe all its sorrow,  
Till war and crime shall cease;  
And the hearts of men grown tender  
Girdle the world with peace.  
People

## Gertrude Bustill Mossell: 1855–1948



Portrait of Mrs. N. F. Mossell of Philadelphia, Pa., published in *The Colored American*, Washington D.C., February 2, 1901, Library of Congress

“Give women more power in the government offices if the desire is for peace and prosperity.”

Gertrude Bustill Mossell was a dedicated suffragist, a member of the Sojourner Truth Suffrage League, and a journalist and editor who demonstrated how women’s increased political agency could amplify peace and prosperity for all. A member of the prominent Bustill family of Philadelphia, she married Nathan Mossell, the

first Black graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. The inclusion of her daughters in her author portraits emphasizes both family lineage and future legacy.



Group photo portrait by Kuebler Photography (Philadelphia), Gertrude Elizabeth Harding (Bustill) Mossell, with daughters Mazie Campbell (1884–1968) [left] and Florence Alma (1887–1962) [right], ca. 1890, University of Pennsylvania Archives



## Suffrage and the Black Press



Clipping, Gertrude Bustill Mossell, "Our Woman's Department," New York Freeman, New York, New York, July 10, 1886, p. 1

Black communities sought and contributed to well-rounded press coverage about Black life and political activism. Philadelphia's Gertrude Bustill Mossell wrote the first ever woman's column in the history of the Black press and urged women readers to educate themselves about the suffrage movement. Mossell joined the ranks of nationally renowned Black journalists like Ida B. Wells, with her byline appearing in the African American Philadelphia Echo, Philadelphia Independent, the Philadelphia Inquirer, among other outlets. Her books combated sexism and celebrated the achievements of Black women.

## Arguing For Suffrage



Postcard by Katherine Milhous (1894–1977), "Votes for Women," postcard, National Woman Suffrage Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1915

Noted children's book illustrator Katherine Milhous (1894–1977) designed this sarcastic suffrage postcard in 1915 for the Pennsylvania Limited Equal Suffrage League of Philadelphia. Milhous also designed suffrage posters for the Center City windows of the Equal Franchise Society. She lived and worked with her partner of over 40 years, the artist Frances Lichten.

Suffragists were experts at facing down opposition, publishing pamphlets such as these to answer and refute false, anti-suffrage attacks:

pamphlet by Alice Stone Blackwell (1857–1950), *Objections Answered*, Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association, 1915



“Votes for Women” pennant, Woman Suffrage Collection, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

Pennants were used to further amplify the message to a broader public audience.

Philadelphia and Pennsylvania suffragist meetings addressed fundraising, publicity, and updated supporters on national suffrage wins. Documents from these meetings include:

Votes for Women: A Success, ca. 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Program of the Second Annual Convention, Women Suffrage Party of Pennsylvania, February 26, 1917, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center

## Pro and Anti

At the beginning of the 20th century, the fight for women’s suffrage intensified, and public debate polarized into two main camps—those fighting for suffrage and those opposed, the so-called “Antis.” The Antis argued that voting was a burden for women who already held important positions as caregivers and homemakers. They insisted that women’s participation in politics would upend gender norms and reliable social structures. In 1917, the Antis doubled down on their efforts as women’s roles in society started to expand—women won the right to vote in New York state, found success in the public sphere through congressional election wins, and were proving their value in the World War I workforce.

## Arguing Against Suffrage

### **Why were Women Involved in the anti-Suffrage movement?**

Many wealthy, white women benefited in a society based on rigid gender norms. These women, who experienced many cultural privileges because of their economic class,

therefore sought to preserve the status quo. In such “anti” arguments, we see claims that women already enjoyed many freedoms and power—especially the freedom to avoid politics.

Antis argued that the women’s right to vote might destabilize the so-called social order.



This political cartoon reveals the anxiety likely felt by Antis, who urged people to steer clear of women’s suffrage.

### Documents include:

Why women oppose votes for women, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Women’s Suffrage pledge card, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Votes for men [back], Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

An appeal to men, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Votes for men, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Harris & Ewing, Inc. photography studio, National Anti-Suffrage Association, c. 1911, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

What is feminism?, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Facts and figures about woman suffrage, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

The case against woman suffrage: A manual for speakers, debaters, writers, lecturers, and anyone who wants the facts and figures, New York, New York: The Man-Suffrage Association, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Opinions of patriots against double suffrage, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915, Government Publications Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

## “The Race Problem”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony embraced an anti-Black agenda and funding from a noted white supremacist to achieve the goals of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). They claimed that literate white women deserved to vote before their “political inferiors” such as formerly enslaved men or immigrants.



Photo portrait by Napoleon Sarony (1821–1896), Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, albumen silver print, c. 1870, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

# Divided We Fall

## Ida B. Wells-Barnett: 1862–1931

### **Suffragist, journalist, and civil rights leader**

Ida B. Wells-Barnett is known for her long-standing anti-lynching activism and leadership in women's clubs. In 1913, she refused to march in a segregated section of a suffrage parade, taking her place instead alongside white women of the Illinois delegation. Along with two white allies, she was a founder of the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago, created for Black women in response to the exclusion and racism found in other national suffrage organizations. The Alpha Suffrage Club insisted that all women should gain the right to vote. Memberships grew to the thousands as Black women joined together to fight against disenfranchisement, promote Black candidates for elections, canvass, and register new voters.



Photo portrait by Sallie E. Garrity (c. 1862–1907), Ida B. Wells-Barnett, albumen silver print, c. 1893, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”

Documents show how white suffragists supported disenfranchisement of Black Americans and positioned their cause as a tool to promote white supremacy, such as *Will the Federal Suffrage Amendment Complicate the Race Problem?*, broadside, Philadelphia: Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, 1913–1916, Caroline Katzenstein Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania



Editorial cartoon, *Just Like the Men, Votes for White Women*, published in the *New-York Tribune*, March 1, 1913, image 9, p. 9, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress

Black women led nationwide efforts for suffrage yet faced discrimination and segregation at national meetings and parades, as shown in this editorial cartoon from 1913.

## On the Road...



Image of woman driving a car through a gates with the words The Amendment on the side of the car, by Charles Henry Sykes, "Now Straight Ahead," Evening Public Ledger, Philadelphia, March 12, 1920, p. 10, Free Library of Philadelphia Digital Collections

Philadelphian Mary Burnham donated a car to the Equal Franchise Society of Philadelphia, even paying for the chauffeur. Painted suffrage purple and yellow, the "Burnham Winner" was in use "day and night" carrying suffragists, and their messages, "hither and thither" in Philadelphia and beyond. Documents about the Burnham Winner include:

"Suffrage Speakers Initiate New Auto 'Burnham Winner' Donated to Equal Franchise Society, Begins as Platform," The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, July 30, 1915, p. 8

"Gift Auto for Suffrage Takes First Trip," Evening Public Leger, July 9, 1915, night extra, image provided by Penn State University Libraries; University Park, PA, for Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress

"Gay New Suffrage Auto to Tour City Decorated in Purple and Yellow," The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, July 29, 1915, p. 8



Newspaper clipping about Burnham Winner.



# Suffrage on the Move

Suffragists took their message to the streets by mobilizing, marching, and moving through public space. “Militant,” or radical, tactics such as open air meetings and soap-box speeches were adopted by Philadelphia suffragists starting in 1911. Parades, car tours, hot air balloons, and bicycles transported women and their cause throughout Philadelphia and beyond. Automobiles were considered respectable and heightened the spectacle of suffrage events, drawing increased crowds and potential supporters. Temperance and suffrage leaders also encouraged women to adopt the affordable self-reliance of bicycle riding, which for some resulted in fashion reforms such as pants-like bloomers or pantaloons.

Bertha Sapovits (1890–1984) was a suffrage organizer and open-air speaker for the Equal Franchise Society of Philadelphia, often conducting stump speeches in the middle of her work day at Gimbel's department store. Addressing hundreds of workmen at the Baldwin Locomotive Works and other industrial plants in Philadelphia, she was described as having a “remarkable voice that could rise above the noise....”



Bertha Sapovits portrait postcard, ca. 1915, Caroline Katzenstein papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

## In The Streets...

Bicycle riding resulted in fashion reforms and women wearing a “proper bicycle costume,” such as this one from 1895.



Photograph of woman riding a bicycle, “The Giddy Age: A proper bicycle costume for women in 1895,” Free Library of Philadelphia Digital Collections



L. A. W. Local cycling map, 1897, Free Library of Philadelphia Digital Map Collections

## In The Air...

Cars and trains weren't the only transportation carrying suffrage sentiment along campaigning routes. In 1914, the First Lady of Philadelphia, Lucretia Blankenburg, christened the "Greater Philadelphia," a hot air balloon headed for Washington D.C. and carrying 20,000 slips of suffragist literature to be distributed overboard on a "wind-determined route."



Photo portrait by Frederick Gutekunst (1831–1917), Mrs. Rudolph Blankenburg (Lucretia Longshore Blankenburg), photograph, 1911, Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress

## Documents include:

"Mayor Christens Newest Balloon...," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, September 30, 1914, p. 3

"Suffrage Balloon Makes Short Flight," *South Bend News-Times*, South Bend, IN (afternoon edition), image provided by Indiana State Library for Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress

## Dunbar-Nelson's scrapbook of 1915

Alice Dunbar-Nelson's scrapbook reflects her dedication to social change and her accomplishments as a public persona who could draw crowds in the thousands.

Scrapbook cover and pages from the Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

## Alice Dunbar-Nelson: 1875–1935



Portrait of Alice Dunbar-Nelson, n.d., Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

“Every drop of my blood holds an heritage of patriotism.”



**Learn more!** Visit the Rosenbach's new digital exhibition, “I Am an American!”: The Authorship and Activism of Alice Dunbar-Nelson

[www.alicedunbarnelson.com](http://www.alicedunbarnelson.com)

Suffrage associations employed paid organizers such as Alice Dunbar-Nelson who travelled in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware in 1915, often lecturing several times a day to both Black and white audiences. A queer pioneer and artist-activist, Dunbar-Nelson wrote across genres and published a large body of criticism, poetry, journalism, and plays covering subjects such as suffrage, domestic violence, anti-lynching laws, and civil rights. Dunbar-Nelson spent her last years in Philadelphia, where she died in 1935 and was posthumously recognized by the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority with an honorary membership.

**Pins, stamps, and swag allowed suffrage supporters to spread the word, advertise their allegiance, and build momentum.**

## **What symbols of justice are in use today?**

Historical examples include:

Women's suffrage stamps, ca. 1913, designed by Caroline Katzenstein, Caroline Katzenstein Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Penna. Votes for Women pin, 1915, Woman Suffrage Collection, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

Suffrage Bell watchband, Women's Suffrage Collection, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

## A Woman's Liberty Bell

The Justice Bell was the centerpiece of a spectacular campaign in spring 1915 to persuade voting-age men to support a women's suffrage referendum to the Pennsylvania state Constitution. Chester County activist Katherine Wentworth Ruschenberger (1853–1943) paid \$2,000 to cast a new bell, inspired by the Liberty Bell and engraved with the message "Establish Justice." Driven on a flatbed truck to every county in Pennsylvania, the 2,000 pound bronze Bell was accompanied by persuasive rallies, open-air meetings, and parades. Despite the newsworthy fanfare and attention, the referendum was defeated.

### **The Justice Bell**



Photo of a young leader at Justice Bell parade, Milton, PA, September 17, 1915, League of Women Voters records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Photo of Katharine Wentworth Ruschenberger with the Justice Bell addressing a crowd in Carlisle, PA, October 1, 1915, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA.

**Additional documents include:**

Photo of the Justice Bell at Independence Square, September 23, 1920,  
Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center

Photo of the casting the Suffrage "Liberty Bell" at Troy, 5 × 7 in., Bain News  
Service publisher, 1915, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Photo of Louise Hall speaking at a campaign stop, 1915, League of Women  
Voters records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Photo of Suffragist Louise Hall on tour with the Justice Bell

The Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association is in attendance as the Justice  
Bell is cast at Meneely Bell Company.

November 2, 1915 PA Suffrage VOTED DOWN

Pennsylvania Men's League for Women Suffrage Votes by County map, 1915,  
Caroline Katzenstein Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The  
Pennsylvania Men's League for Woman Suffrage map showing PA counties for  
(in white) or against (in black) the 1915 PA women's suffrage referendum

# The Fight for the Vote 1890–1990

## Securing voting rights continues beyond the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.



Photo of delegation of Pennsylvania picketers in Washington D.C., 1917 by Harris & Ewing, Inc. photography studio, Women Suffrage Pennsylvania Pickets, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

1896

### Founding of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC)

Founders Mary Mcleod Bethune, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, and Harriet Tubman campaigned in favor of women's suffrage and against terror lynching and Jim Crow laws. The group's motto was "Lifting as we Climb".

1913

Ida B. Wells-Barnett founded the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago.

An advocate for Black women's suffrage, Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862–1931) defied the racial segregation of the 1913 Washington D.C. suffrage parade by marching with the white Illinois delegation.



Photo portrait by Sallie E. Garrity, (c. 1862–1907), Ida B. Wells-Barnett, c. 1893, albumen silver print, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



Clipping with Wells-Barnett writing from The Alpha Suffrage Record, vol. 1, no. 1, March 18, 1914

1920

19th Amendment ratified

1922

Takao v. United States

The Supreme Court upheld the 1790 Naturalization Act barring Asian Americans from becoming citizens and voting. Full voting rights were not granted until 1952.

1924

The Indian Citizenship Act granted U.S. citizenship to Native Americans.

The Indian Citizenship Act granted U.S. citizenship to Native Americans, though states continue to suppress the Indigenous vote. Zitkála-Šá (also known as Gertrude Bonnin), was a member of the Yankton Dakota Sioux, a writer, composer, teacher, and suffragist who fought for Native American civil rights.



Photo portrait by Joseph T. Keiley (1869–1914), Zitkala-Ša (1876–1936), 1898, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

1964

Patsy Takemoto Mink elected to the U.S. House of Representatives

Representing the 2nd Congressional District of Hawai'i, Patsy Takemoto Mink authored the Title IX Bill prohibiting "discrimination on the basis of sex" in federally funded educational programs. In 2014, it was renamed the Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act.



Patsy Takemoto Mink poster, ca. 1970, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

In 1964, Fanny Lou Hamer founded The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party after she is refused the right to register to vote.

Photo portrait by Warren K. Leffler, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegate at the Democratic National Convention, Atlantic City, NJ, August 1964, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

1965

Voting Rights Act was signed into law, banning literacy tests, poll taxes, and deadly voter suppression tactics aimed at Black Americans.

In 1975, the Act was edited to ensure language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency. And in 2013, a key aspect of the Act was eliminated when *Shelby County v. Holder* removed requirements for states with a history of voting discrimination to get approval for any voting jurisdictions changes.

1968

Shirley Chisholm was the first Black woman elected to Congress.

Representing New York's 12th congressional district, Shirley Chisolm also became in 1972 the first Black candidate from a major party to run for president.



Shirley Chisholm campaign poster, 1972, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

1971

26th Amendment ratified

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Spurred by Vietnam War protesters who argued that if you are old enough to fight in combat, you are old enough to vote, this amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.



1990

After more than a century of advocacy, the Americans with Disabilities Act is passed to help ensure that polls and ballots are accessible.



This photograph of Judy Heumann (b. 1947) was taken in Japan in 2017. Heumann is an internationally recognized, lifelong activist for the rights of people with disabilities.

Ambassador Caroline Kennedy welcomed Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann to Japan, December 2014, East Asia and Pacific Media Hub, Department of State

## A New Amendment



National Woman's Party activists watch Alice Paul sew a star onto the NWP Ratification Flag, representing another state's ratification of the 19th Amendment, c. 1919–1920. National Photo Co., records of the National Woman's Party, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Millions of women still could not vote even after the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, and no American woman had legal protection against gender-based discrimination. Alice Paul (1885–1977), head of the National Women's Party, addressed ongoing gender inequity in her Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), written and proposed in 1923.



The Complete Text of the Equal Rights Amendment poster, Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

## How do Social Movements mobilize participants today?

Pro-ERA posters called supporters into the streets for marches and rallies. Materials include:

Finish the Job poster, Offset Printing Company, 1987, Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

Pro-ERA Button, 1972–1982, National Museum of American History



Group photo by Gary L. Shivers includes sign with text "ERA YES," "Advocates for the Equal Rights Amendment," Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, October 16, 1981, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center

In Philadelphia, pro-ERA women and their allies marched and rallied to demand full and equal legal protections against gender-based discrimination.

# Anti Versus Pro

In the 1970s, anti-ERA activists claimed that the Equal Rights Amendment threatened women's rights and choices by forcing them to serve in the armed forces, leaving them without helpful labor laws or spousal support, and making all public restrooms gender-integrated.



Photo portrait by Warren K. Leffler, Phyllis Schlafly demonstrating against the Equal Rights Amendment in front of the White House with a "STOP ERA" sign visible, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Phyllis Schlafly rallied against so-called "women's libbers" and successfully led an anti-ERA campaign preventing ratification of the Amendment in the 1970s.

## **Additional documents include:**

Button used by opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment, 2 ¼ in. diameter, Joyce E. Hamula, National Museum of American History

Lucy Picco Simpson (1940–2008), She will die but never give up, poster, originally published in TABS: Aids for Ending Sexism in School, 1977, Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

# The ERA in Pennsylvania



Photo Portrait by John W. Mosely (1907–1969), C. DeLores Tucker and Judge A. Leon Higginbotham at City Hall, Philadelphia, February 1, 1968, Charles L. Blockson Afro American Collection, Temple University Libraries

Alice Paul’s ERA was rewritten in 1972 and approved by Congress. Pennsylvania ratified the ERA in September 1972 with the leadership of Philadelphia-based C. DeLores Tucker (1927–2005), Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the highest ranking Black woman in Pennsylvania state government in the 1970s. An advocate for voting access and women’s rights, Tucker formed the first commission on the Status of Women in Pennsylvania, was among the founders of African American Women for Reproductive Freedom, and led efforts to register voters by mail and reduce the voting age to 18.

## **The Equal Rights Amendment remains unapproved and in limbo today.**

In January 2020, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the ERA, meeting the state ratification percentage required for full Constitutional adoption of the Amendment. However, five states have rescinded their approval, and the Amendment is now well past its original 1982 ratification deadline.



Women’s Rights button reads, “My consciousness is fine: It’s my pay that needs raising,” 1977, National Museum of American History

# Why We Picket



Group photo portrait, Harris & Ewing, Inc. photography studio, Pennsylvania on the Picket Line, print; 4 × 7 in., Washington D.C, 1917, Records of the National Woman's Party, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

In 1917, Pennsylvania women picketed the White House to demand the right to vote. Organized by Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party (NWP), this picket was the first ever White House protest of its kind. For almost three years, the "Silent Sentinels," as the protesters were known in the press, held bold flags of purple, white, and gold, and text banners directly calling for President Woodrow Wilson to support women's suffrage.

Histories often fail to recognize Black women Sentinels. Yet Black leadership and participation in this historic action is confirmed by Mary Church Terrell's account of standing in protest on hot bricks in the winter months.



Photo portrait by Addison N. Scurlock (1883–1964), Portrait of Mary Church Terrell (1863–1954), gelatin silver print, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

**Additional documents include:**

Why We Picket broadside, Washington D.C.: National Women's Party, 1917,  
Caroline Katzenstein Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

## Freedom for women is not a crime



White House picketers were arrested for "obstructing traffic."  
Philadelphian Dora Lewis, an officer in the National Woman's Party (NWP), is seen here leaving prison after enduring torture and force feeding.

Dora Lewis of Philadelphia on release from jail after five-day hunger strike, print; 3.75 × 4.75 in., August 1918, Records of the National Woman's Party, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress



Mary Winsor of Haverford, also imprisoned, campaigned for suffragists to be classified as political prisoners, not criminals.

Harris & Ewing, Inc. photography studio, Mary Winsor, print; 4.25 × 7 in., Washington D.C., 1917, Records of the National Woman's Party, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

## The Justice Bell Rings

On September 25, 1920, Katherine Wentworth Ruschenberger, patron of the Justice Bell, sat in attendance with hundreds of others at Independence Hall as her niece Catherine Wentworth rang the Bell 48 times, once for each state, in celebration of the passing of the 19th Amendment. One hundred and forty-four years after the Declaration of Independence was read in that same historic Philadelphia location, the right to vote was expanded.



Catherine Wentworth, niece of Justice Bell patron Katherine Wentworth Ruschenberger, rings the Justice Bell at Independence Hall, 8 × 10 in., The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, September 23, 1920, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center

# We Shall Not be Denied

Philadelphia was a hub of voter registration and celebration when the 19th Amendment was ratified in August 1920. This historical moment marks but one facet in women's right to vote. By 1919, some American women had been voting in their states, and, while a momentous achievement, the 19th Amendment offers federal nondiscrimination in voting on the basis of "sex" only, leaving voters to be discriminated against on account of race, national origin, literacy, and other accounts.



Group portrait with Governor Sproul of Pennsylvania signing Suffrage Amendment, 5 × 7 in., Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Philadelphians Dora Lewis (1862–1928) and Ella Riegel (1867–1937) look on as Pennsylvania Governor Sproul signs the 19th Amendment— with a purple and yellow feathered quill.

Dora Lewis, left, was Chairman of the ratification committee, Pennsylvania branch, National Woman's Party.

Ella Riegel, right, was a member of the executive committee, Pennsylvania branch, National Woman's Party.

**Additional documents include:** Pennsylvania State Senate, Legislature of Pennsylvania File of the Senate No. 1222 PN 805, 1919, Caroline Katzenstein papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

**Women achieved the right to vote in 1920 yet still face inequity, earning approximately 81¢ for every dollar a man earns.**

**How do women continue to experience inequity today?**

## The Fight continues



Group photo by Richard Rosenberg, "Civil Rights Rally, Independence Hall, Philadelphia, March 14, 1965," The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center

The struggle to secure fair voting rights and access continues. From the end of the Civil War until 1965, white lawmakers and citizens enacted intimidation and suppression campaigns to threaten or stop Black Americans and other marginalized groups from voting. Deadly racial terrorism, poll taxes, gerrymandering, and literacy and legal tests were among the tactics used to preserve white male supremacy and political dominance. These measures were upheld by the Supreme Court until the 1965 Voting



Rights Act, which attempted to end such racial barriers and secure other protections such as ballots in multiple languages for Americans with limited English proficiency. Sections of the Voting Rights Act have been eliminated since 1965, and calculated voter disenfranchisement continues.

Black Lives Matter founders, Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Cullors, along with their allies and supporters, continue to raise awareness about voting access. Launched by BLM in advance of the 2020 general election, #whatmatters2020 engages Black communities in the electoral process, promotes voter registration, and raises awareness about racial injustice, police brutality, LGBTQIA+ and human rights, voting rights, and more.



Group photo portrait [Left to right] Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, TEDWomen 2016: It's About Time, October 26–28, 2016, Yerba Buena Centre for the Arts, San Francisco, CA., photo: Marla Aufmuth / TED



The pink, blue, and white Transgender Pride Flag flies over Philadelphia City Hall; the flag was designed by Monica Helms in 1999, photo: S. Reyes for City of Philadelphia



The Black Transgender Flag, with stripes in blue, pink, and black, was created in 2015 by activist and writer Raquel Willis

Nonbinary Pennsylvanians can obtain a non-gender-specific marker on their driver's license as of 2020, yet in many states trans, genderqueer, and non-binary voters continue to face challenges in obtaining accurate legal identification that can be required to vote.

**“The grand aim of the [Voting Rights] Act is to secure...equal citizenship..., a voice in our democracy....”**

**– Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 2013**

Voting by mail offers safe voting during the pandemic but is also threatened by erosion of support for the United States Postal Service



Color photo of voter dropping off ballot at City Hall, by Yong Kim/Staff Photographer, The Philadelphia Inquirer

## **Lorene Cary: Vote That Jawn**

Lorene Cary, a writer and scholar, mobilizes students in her hometown of Philadelphia with an aim of registering 10,000 more voters during the coronavirus pandemic by using social media, virtual gatherings, in-person voting drives, and city-wide, youth-led collaborations. Self-expression drives involvement, with the ballot box as entry point for lifelong civic engagement.



Group photo portrait [Left to right] Lorene Cary, Caleb Tann, Michelle Saahene, Kamryn Davis, photo: Blue Cadet

**“If this is your first time, no matter who you are, your birthright is your voice and your vote, your jawn. Let’s not just talk about making things better, let’s do it.”**

#VOTETHATJAWN

## Whose vote? Our vote

The ratification of the 19th Amendment expanded voting and citizenship rights in the United States. Philadelphia women continue to lead intergenerational, multiracial, mixed gender movements for voting rights and inspire us to fight for, protect, and use one of our most important tools of personal and political power and engagement—the right to vote.

## **The Reentry Think Tank**

The Reentry Think Tank connects formerly incarcerated men and women with artists and advocates to transform the stereotypes, social services, and platforms that impact our lives and communities. Voting rights are closely tied to successful reentry and personal agency, especially as it is estimated that some 6 million Americans cannot vote due to felony disenfranchisement—laws that prevent people with felony convictions from voting.

# The Reentry Bill of Rights



Photo portrait of Courtney Bowles, who co-directs the People's Paper Co-op and the Reentry Think Tank in Philadelphia. Photo: Reentry Think Tank



Photo portrait of Faith Bartley, who is Lead Fellow of the People's Paper Co-op and Reentry Think Tank Fellow. Photo: Reentry Think Tank



The Reentry Bill of Rights is letterpress printed on handmade paper made by formerly incarcerated women in the People's Paper Co-op's Art and Advocacy Fellowship. Criminal records from legal clinics and public workshops were torn, pulped, and transformed into new sheets of handmade paper that act as blank slates for this collective vision for transformative justice.

Photo: Reentry Think Tank

Women have spent generations fighting for the right to vote with the knowledge that voting amplifies our voices and shapes our futures.

**How will you make your voice heard?**