**History of Voting Rights for All**

We have had 100 years of empowering voters and defending Democracy. This “mighty political experiment" was founded by **suffragists in 1920** to help newly enfranchised women exercise their voice. The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution granted American women the right to vote, a vote known as women’s suffrage and was ratified on August 18, 1920 ending almost a century of protest. **Certification of the 19th Amendment occurred on August 26, 1920.**

A suffragist could be a man or woman who believed in extending the right to vote in public and political elections, also known as suffrage (Comes from a Latin word broadened to refer to a vote cast in favor of someone and eventually the privilege or right to vote in general.) Also, **the US women’s suffrage movement had** its roots in the abolition movement of the 1830s.

In early years of the women’s rights movement, the agenda included much more than just the right to vote. Their broad goals included equal access to education and employment, equality within marriage and a married woman’s rights to her own property and wages, custody over her children and control over her own body.

Despite the adoption of the 19th Amendment, many women of color, immigrant women and poorer women continued to face barriers at the polls. In the south, black women’s votes were suppressed solely on the basis of race.

**Snyder Act of 1924** extended citizenship to all Native American Indians born in the United States. Not very many tribes took advantage of this act.

**The Freedom Riders** were civil rights activists who rode interstate buses into the segregated Southern US in 1961 challenging the ruling that segregated public buses were unconstitutional (1946 & 1960). “The Freedom March” from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery marching under a court order with Martin Lutheran King, Jr.

**Voting Rights Act of 1965** signed by Lynden Johnson aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented Black Americans from voting. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders signed this Immigration and Nationality Act into law.

The ***John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of* 2021** is proposed legislation (HB 4) that would restore and strengthen parts of the Voting Rights of 1965, certain portions of which were struck down by two Supreme Court decisions. This bill, named after late Georgia Representative and voting rights activist John Lewis, passed the House August 24, 2021. Powerful statements about state violations such as changes to voting practices, enforcing voting rights, voting discrimination. Was sent to the Senate on Sept. 14, 2021 but did not pass the Senate. Go online and find out if your legislator co-sponsored this bill.

**Voting Rights Under Attack**

Last year, there were over 441 laws restricting access to voting rights. At least 27 states have passed restricting access this year. Here is a list of some restrictive anti-voter tactics impacting voters before election day.

**Tactics used to get in the way of voting:**

* Reducing early voting hours
* Reducing acceptable reasons to vote by absentee
* Requiring voters to request ballot applications
* Requiring 1-2 witness signatures on ballots
* Prohibiting election officials from sending absentee ballots to all registered voters
* Aggressive voter roll purges
* Limitations to voter education
* Recruit and endorse candidates who support Former President Trump to run for state-level offices, who, if elected, would oversee election administration with the intent of changing the outcome.
* Forming election police force (Florida when no voter fraud has been detected)
* States are considering a bill that makes it illegal for groups like the LWV to provide registration, outreach, and education services (AL)
* Redistricting inequalities

**Tactics used on Election Day:**

* Last minute changes to polling locations
* Restricting absentee ballot access
* Prohibiting ballot drop boxes and curbside drop off areas
* No support to provide water to those standing in line
* No support to provide transportation to those going to vote

**What can YOU do?**

Be a voter, encourage others to vote

Learn what your Legislator from your district has voted for; elect those who support what you are passionate about

Write to your Legislator to let him or her know about issues or bills you feel strongly about.

Write letters to the editor in local and state-wide publications

Encourage people you know to become local leaders in your community; to run for offices including school district boards

Watch Fix Democracy First every Wednesday at 5pm with Cindy Black

“Free the Vote” t-shirts free, freethevotewa.org, fixdemocracyfirst.org

Join the “League of Women Voters” or go to their website and keep abreast of what is happening. <https://www.lwv.org>

Educate yourself on voting rights

i.e. WA automatically restores voting rights to people with past felony convictions immediately after they finish their prison terms. Every citizen who is not in prison will be allowed to vote, even while on community supervision. We are welcoming over 20,000 voters back into our democracy. The paths that brought these people into criminal legal system are often rooted in poverty, racism and inequities in housing, healthcare and education. Research has shown that when people are civically engaged and have a stake in their community, they are less likely to return to the system.

Heads up: Dept. of Youth Rehabilitation Services is a transformative mentoring intervention program for youth committee to the agency. The mission is to connect all young people in the care and custody of DYRS to healthy homes and supportive communities.

HB 1363 Secondary trauma in the K-12 workforce, dept. of child services

988 Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline Hotline (going live in July 2022)