

Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Suffrage

By: Danielle A. Lopez, Director of Marketing & Business Development,
Brouse McDowell LPA



On behalf of the firm's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, I want to spotlight an important day from this past month. August 26th, known as Women's Equality Day, commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the constitutional right to vote.

For over half a century prior, women suffragists protested and lobbied for full voting rights in the United States. In 1919, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate approved the amendment which went to the states for ratification. By the summer of 1920, 35 states had ratified the amendment, eight states had rejected it, and five states had not voted. One more state vote was needed to ratify the amendment, and suffragists were hopeful that Tennessee could tilt the scale in their favor. On August 18, 1920, Harry T. Burn, a state representative from McMinn County, changed his vote to support the ratification, breaking a tie in the U.S. House of Representatives.¹ Despite efforts by anti-suffrage opponents to nullify the ratification vote, the 19th Amendment was ratified on August 26, 1920, forever protecting American women's right to vote. Women's Equality Day was established by Congresswoman Bella Abzug, leader of the Women's Movement, in 1971, and since that time, every president has published a proclamation for it.

In this centennial year, we celebrate this significant milestone in advancing women's rights and position in the United States. Today, we have 73.7 million women who vote in presidential elections, representing 63% of eligible women voters compared with just 59% of eligible men voters (or 63.8 million men).² Further, women make up a much larger percentage of our workforce and hold more leadership positions than ever before. In fact, in the legal profession women account for 37% of all lawyers in 2020 versus just 20% in 2000 and 3% in 1970,³ and that percentage continues to grow as we see more women enroll in law school every year.

While we celebrate how far we have come, we recognize there is much more to do. In a year when racial and social inequities have been at the forefront, we reflect on the additional steps we can each individually take to effect positive change and continue to break down racial, social and gender inequities that still exist today.

Sources:

¹ Tennessee State Library and Archives, *Women's Suffrage: Tennessee and the Passage of the 19th Amendment*. <https://sos.tn.gov/products/tsla/womens-suffrage-tennessee-and-passage-19th-amendment>

² Center for American Women and Politics. Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. (2019). Gender Differences in Voter Turnout report. Referencing 2016 presidential election data. Data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Reports, Series P-20, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1964" and subsequent reports for all years through 2018. <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/genderdiff.pdf>

³ American Bar Association. (2020). ABA Profile of the Legal Profession 2020 report. <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potip2020.pdf>

Collective Experience. Collaborative Culture. Creative Solutions.

388 South Main Street, Suite 500, Akron, OH 44311
600 Superior Avenue East, Suite 1600, Cleveland, OH 44114
1415 Panther Lane, Suite 138, Naples, FL 34109
300 Madison Avenue, Suite 1000, Toledo, OH 43604
6550 Seville Drive, Suite B, Canfield, OH 44406

© 2020 Brouse McDowell, A Legal Professional Association | www.brouse.com