

Women's History

The fight for equal rights

The women's rights movement started over 150 years ago here in New York State. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony led the way in the fight for women's suffrage, helping women secure the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment. Since then, women have fought tirelessly to break down barriers and expand women's rights and their role in society.

However, the fight for equality is not yet over. While we've passed new laws to strengthen women's rights, unfortunately, glass ceilings still exist and we must continue to make progress.

This pamphlet contains information about important women who shaped our country's history. I hope you find it useful as you learn about those who helped pave the way for a better future.

New York State
Legislative Women's Caucus



Room 829A Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248
518-455-4347, Fax: 518-455-4537 • lwc@nyassembly.gov

Highlights of **WOMEN** Throughout History

1848

First Women's Rights Convention is held in Seneca Falls, N.Y.

1849

Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first licensed female physician.

1865

Mary Edwards Walker becomes the first and only woman to receive the Medal of Honor.



1866

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, which people of all races and both genders join to support universal suffrage.



1896

Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett and former slave Harriet Tubman form the National Association of Colored Women.

1912

Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a women's suffrage plank.

1917

New York State grants women the right to vote.

1920

The 19th Amendment is ratified, granting women the right to vote.

1923

First Equal Rights Amendment is introduced. (Amendment has never been ratified.)



1931

Jane Addams becomes the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

1932

Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to make a transcontinental nonstop flight.

1933

Frances Perkins is appointed Secretary of Labor, becoming the first female member of a presidential cabinet.

1945

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt is appointed as a delegate to the United Nations and helps draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.



1968

Shirley Chisholm, a former NYS Assemblymember, becomes the first African-American woman elected to Congress. In 1972, she becomes the first African-American and first female major-party candidate for the presidency of the United States.

1972

Katharine Graham at the Washington Post becomes the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

1973

In *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court affirms a woman's constitutional right to choose.

1977

Janet Guthrie becomes the first woman to compete in the Indy 500 and the Daytona 500.

1981

Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first woman on the U.S. Supreme Court.



1983

Sally Ride is the first American woman in space.

1984

Geraldine Ferraro is the first woman nominated for vice president by a major party.

1993

Janet Reno becomes the first female U.S. Attorney General.

1997

Madeleine Albright is sworn in as the first female U.S. Secretary of State.

2007

Nancy Pelosi becomes the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives.

2009

Michelle Obama becomes the first African-American First Lady of the U.S.

2009

Sonia Sotomayor becomes the first Hispanic and third female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.



2012

Former Assemblymember Grace Meng becomes the first Asian-American elected to Congress from New York.

2014

Janet Yellen is the first woman to be named chair of the Federal Reserve.

Did you know?

 Women are about 51% of the U.S. population¹

 Women hold just 19% of seats in the U.S. Congress²

 Only 26% of New York State legislators are women

 Women hold a mere 4% of Fortune 500 CEO roles³

 Full-time women workers earn about 78% as much as men⁴

 The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that doesn't mandate paid maternity leave⁵

 1 in 3 women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime⁶

 The U.S. finishes 28th out of 145 countries in terms of gender equality for women⁷

“We can all be proud to say the women’s rights movement began in Seneca Falls right here in New York State. But, as the facts indicate, the fight is far from over. Let’s keep leading the way for true women’s equality.”

¹quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html

²cawp.rutgers.edu/women-us-congress-2015

³catalyst.org/knowledge/women-ceos-fortune-1000

⁴whitehouse.gov/issues/equal-pay

⁵politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2015/jan/21/barack-obama/barack-obama-says-united-states-only-developed-cou/

⁶ncadv.org/learn/statistics

⁷www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf