

How Women Got the Vote: You Might Be Surprised

One hundred years ago this month, the Women's Suffrage Amendment became the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This amendment is simple and reads as follows:

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.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

For the past forty years, some Democrats have hammered Republicans as being against women's rights, largely because so many Republicans oppose abortion. Some even claim that women who vote for conservatives, who vote Republican, or who vote against abortion, are traitors to their sex.

Perhaps a history lesson on women and voting is in order.

Let's start with the suffragettes, the women who sought the right to vote in the United States. Susan B. Anthony and most suffragettes were longstanding Republicans, abolitionists whose oppositions to slavery were tied to their calls for women's suffrage. These women worked tirelessly to win the vote, meeting with such luminaries as Theodore Roosevelt and publicly protesting what they considered a repression of their rights. In 1872, Anthony herself was arrested for voting. That vote, by the way, was cast for a Republican.

Now let's move on to the passage of the 19th Amendment. From the National Federation of Republican Women we have this [brief history](#) of the struggle that led to suffrage for women:

At the request of Susan B. Anthony, Sen. A.A. Sargent, a Republican from California, introduced the 19th Amendment in 1878. Sargent's amendment (also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment) was defeated four times by a Democrat-controlled Senate. When the Republican Party regained control of Congress in 1919, the Equal Suffrage Amendment finally passed the House in May of that year and in the Senate in June.

When the Amendment was submitted to the states, 26 of the 36 states that ratified it had Republican legislatures. Of the nine states that voted against ratification, eight were Democratic. Twelve states, all Republican, had given women full suffrage before the federal amendment was ratified.

That's interesting.

In a *Spectator* piece, "[Dems Revise History Regarding the 19th Amendment](#)," David Caron offers these thoughts:

The reality is that most Democrats were against the 19th Amendment, including President Woodrow Wilson – who was so reviled by the suffragists that they routinely referred to him as 'Kaiser Wilson.' What really delayed Congress from passing the amendment was a forty-year legislative war in which the Democrats did their level best to keep women out of the voting booth. That war began in 1878, when a California Republican named A.A. Sargent introduced the 19th Amendment only to see it voted down by a Democrat-controlled Congress. It finally ended four decades later, when the GOP won landslide victories in the House and the Senate, giving them what we now call a 'super-majority.'

So ladies (and yes, I know some of you frown on that appellation, but I like it, and I'm too old to throw "ladies" in the waste bin of language), enjoy the centennial, but please keep your history straight. Perhaps it's time to give credit where credit is due?

Cheers.

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