

In 1848 a group of people met in Seneca Falls, New York with the common belief that women should have the right to vote. This was the first woman's rights convention. There, the activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the Declaration of Rights and Sentiment demanding equality for women, including the right to vote. Elizabeth Cady Stanton encouraged women to fight for equal rights. She started many associations which gave women the opportunity to speak in public and vote on issues within the associations. Her work laid the foundation for others to follow and eventually resulted in the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution which gave women the right to vote. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of many who overcame obstacles for women.

Sojourner Truth was also a suffragist - someone advocating voting rights. Her life was not easy. She was sold as a slave and was treated terribly before escaping to freedom. She became an activist for equal rights and joined an association to speak out against slavery. In her speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention, Sojourner spoke out about the discrimination experienced by black women. Sojourner Truth used the phrase "Ain't I a Woman" four times in her speech to emphasize the gender and racial oppression was happening in America. Her activism attracted the attention of many, even the President Abraham Lincoln. Sojourner Truth was a strong Christian woman who fought for black women's rights and didn't give up when met with opposition.

Ida B. Wells was also met with opposition from her peers in the women's suffrage activists group. She was confronted with racism by white women within the suffrage movement, but that didn't discourage her from being active and fighting for women's right to vote. Because of how she was treated, she decided to start a suffrage group in Chicago for black women so that they wouldn't be met with the same racism she experienced. Ida also became a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She traveled to Washington to attend a suffrage parade that was organized by Alice Paul for the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The parade was segregated but Ida ignored the rules and marched at the front to take a stand for black women.

Alice Paul was also known for more radical actions to get attention from the White House in order to have the right to vote. She led pickets at the White House, but she and others were arrested and imprisoned for this. Alice also tried holding hunger strikes which ended in her getting force-fed by authorities.

Carrie Chapman Catt was the president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. She organized campaigns and delivered speeches. She believed women had the natural right to be in politics equally with men. Alice's

actions and Carrie's persuasion soon made President Woodrow Wilson take action to make a federal suffrage amendment. All of these women were great leaders but sadly some of them didn't live to see the results of their efforts. Their actions led to equal rights for women, including the right to vote. In 1920, the right of women to vote was ratified. After this, women still fought for equality in other parts of their lives. As women started to become more and more influential in politics, discrimination for gender was reduced. In 1974, enactment of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act prohibited lenders from discriminating based on race, age, religion, or sex. Before this, women were not as recognised for their accomplishments.

Why should women play active roles in politics today? Why shouldn't they? Every citizen has to live by the laws and regulations created by lawmakers in politics. Women make up more than half of the population and should have a say in the laws that govern them. With more women involved, women's rights are not as likely to be overlooked or taken away. Whether male or female, we all need to work together to solve problems, support families, and build a strong national democracy. The voices of all citizens should be heard and respected. Every race and every gender should have equal rights and an input in how their nation is governed. Without the input of every citizen, "We the people" has no meaning. Only through equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal input will everyone know justice.