

# WOMEN POWER THE VOTE

NH Voter February 2020  
League of Women Voters NH

LWVNH.org

**Happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to us!** On Feb. 14, 1920, with the women's suffrage amendment nearing ratification, the National American Woman Suffrage Association under Carrie Chapman Catt met in national convention and voted to change their name to ... the League of Women Voters!

**A bit of history:** Recognizing that women needed to learn how to use their newly won right to vote, the fledgling non-partisan League of Women Voters, under national president Maud Wood Park, set about the task of explaining the workings of government and the details of voter registration and casting a ballot.

In New Hampshire the Equal Suffrage Association of NH met on November 19, 1919, just two months after NH ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, and changed its name to the League of Women Voters of New Hampshire. The first state League's "chairman" was Martha Kimball of Portsmouth, who had been president of the Equal Suffrage Association.

Mary I. Wood, also of Portsmouth, chaired the Woman's Citizenship Committee of NH, which was running "Citizenship Schools" on weekends to educate the first crop of NH's female voters about the process. Kimball and Wood realized they were duplicating efforts, so Kimball resigned her chair and Mary Wood became the LWVNH president in 1920.

**A call to commemorate:** Feb. 14 has been declared a Day of Action for League of Women Voters members everywhere. What can you do to celebrate our hundredth birthday and make a difference?  
Here are four suggestions...

**Tell you Congressional Representative to vote for H.J.Res. 79** in the US House. This bill would remove the deadline for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Now that Virginia has voted to ratify the ERA and has become the required 38<sup>th</sup> state to do so, passing H.J.Res. 79 bill in Congress makes clear that the deadline of 1982 doesn't matter—the ERA will become the law of the land. H.J.Res 79 was voted out of the Judiciary Committee in Nov. 2019; next step is a full vote in the House. *(see note at the end for how to phone or email your Congressional Representative)*

**Call or email your NH House representative and your NH Senator to support the independent redistricting commission bill HB1665.** It will come up for a vote in the House

soon, and after it passes there with bi-partisan support (thinking positively here, as an earlier version had bi-partisan support in the House in 2019), the Senate will get their chance. Tell them to end partisan gerrymandering; you want NH's districts to be fairly apportioned following the 2020 census! An independent advisory commission is constitutional!

**If you can, support the League's work with a donation** beyond the dues you have already paid. Think of it as a birthday present to League. You can donate online on the "Dues and Donations Online" page of our state League's website LWVNH.org. "Donorbox" works like Paypal. Click the box "Write Us a Comment" and identify this as a donation to either the LWVNH Education Fund, which is our tax-deductible arm that funds our forums and Get Out The Vote work, or you can designate it to LWVNH for our advocacy work. We'll put it to good use!

**Encourage a friend to join the League.** New members can use the same "Donorbox" or download a membership form on our website and mail it with a dues check. Remember the old birthday greeting that ended with "...and a pinch to grow an inch"? Growing membership on our birthday is a great idea!

**More about the ERA**—a frequently asked question is, I've heard some states have rescinded their approval of the ERA. What does that mean?

The National Archives follows the procedures of the Secretary of State, who was in charge of formal proclamations on constitutional amendments until 1950. [According to the National Archives](#): "The Archivist does not make any substantive determinations as to the validity of State ratification actions, but it has been established that the Archivist's certification of the facial legal sufficiency of ratification documents is final and conclusive." This means that, once a state has sent their certified copy of their ratification action to NARA and NARA has formally certified it, a state cannot rescind its ratification action.

Legal language but good news. Just to make sure, two states' attorney generals have brought suit against the National Archives to be sure the process is followed.

Another bit of history: Suffragist Alice Paul introduced the ERA in December 1923. One version or another bounced around Congress until 1972, when it passed and was sent to the states for ratification (three-quarters of the states needed = 38 states). The deadline was extended to 1982, but we didn't get # 38 until this past January. Hence H.J.Res.79 to extend the deadline and make equal rights the law of the land.



Hard to believe that declaring women's equality has been a 94 years long process.

**Member news from Liz Tentarelli, president:**

I love reading comments when members renew their dues, but this one was special. **Katie Wheeler** of Durham wrote: "The New Hampshire LWV was instrumental in giving me the desire and encouragement to exercise my civic responsibility to serve my community by running for office as a NH State Rep and NH State Senator!"

A google search reveals that Wheeler was first elected to the House in 1988. In 1996, she was elected to the NH Senate from the 21<sup>st</sup> district after Jeanne Shaheen, the seat's previous holder, was elected governor. Wheeler continued to serve in the New Hampshire Senate until her retirement in 2002.

In January I was at Kendal in Hanover giving a presentation about the history of women's suffrage. In the audience was **Augusta Prince**, a "Life" member of League (over 50 years—I didn't ask how many). Augusta is 100 years old, born a year plus a few months before women had the right to vote. It was a delight to chat with her and remind her that she was on the LWV Upper Valley team who trained me and several other League members how to moderate forums, 20 years ago. Thank you, Augusta.

We note with sadness the passing in January of **Jean Broehl** of Hanover, another "Life" member and friend of Augusta.

The NH Voter and the weekly legislative alerts are now coming to email users via "Mailchimp" for reasons of efficiency. Please don't "unsubscribe" or we lose contact with you. If you're too busy to read an alert when it comes, just delete it and catch the next one. Thank you.

***Contacting your Congressional Representatives:***

District 1: **Congressman Chris Pappas** (D)

DC phone (202) 225-5456

Dover NH office: (603) 285-4300

Email: use the "contact us" webform at [pappas.house.gov](http://pappas.house.gov)

District 2: **Congresswoman Ann McLane Kuster** (D)

DC phone: (202) 225-5206 FAX (202) 225-2946

Concord NH office: (603) 226-1002 FAX 226-1010

Email: use the "contact" webform at [kuster.house.gov](http://kuster.house.gov)