
Document 1

A Petition for Universal Suffrage

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The undersigned, Women of the United States, respectfully ask an amendment of the Constitution that shall prohibit the several states from disenfranchising [prevent a group of people from voting] any of their citizens on the ground of gender. In making our demand for suffrage, we would call your attention to the fact that we represent fifteen million people - one half of the entire population of the country - intelligent, virtuous, native-born American citizens and yet not provided with political recognition.

The Constitution classes us free people and counts as whole persons in the basis of recognition and representation; and yet we are governed without our consent, unlike men. We are compelled to pay taxes without appeal when laws do not suit us, and punished for violations of the law without choice of judge or representatives to make the laws...

Source: Suffrage Petition (1866) Rochester, NY

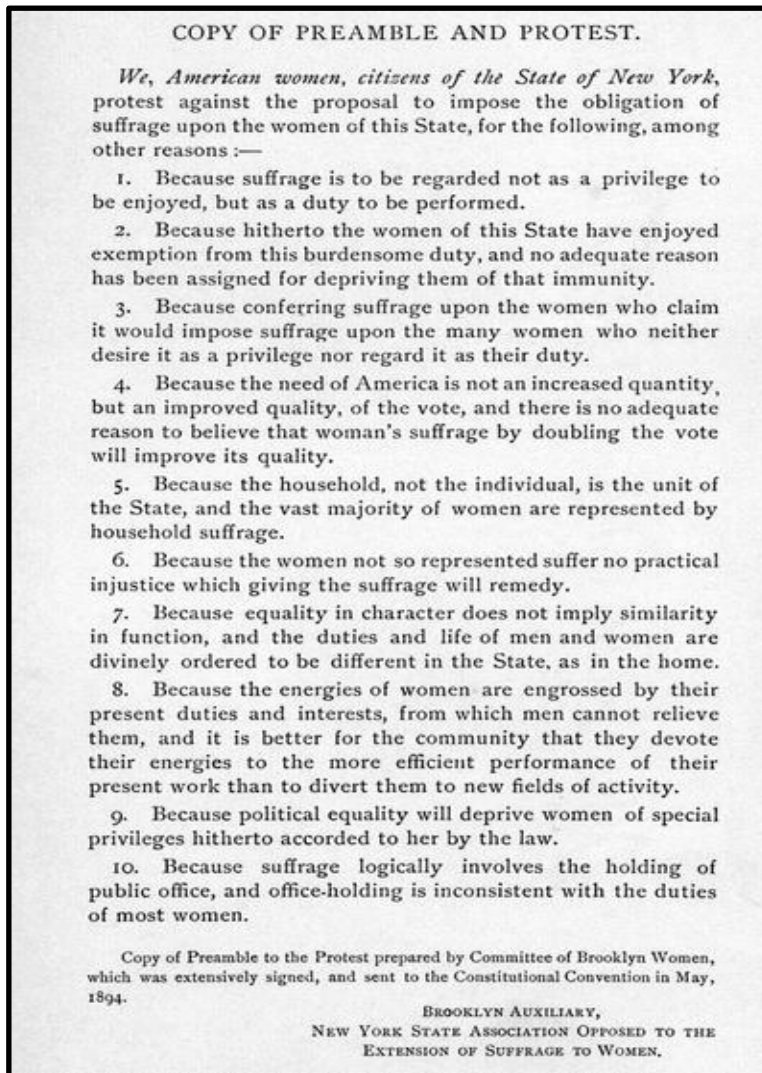
Document 2

“But the women of this nation are educated equally with the men, and have their political opinions. ...I do not believe you can find a score of women in the whole Nation - who have not opinions on the pending presidential elections. We all have opinions....we all have parties; some like one party and one candidate and some another. Women... they will think and act for themselves, and when they are enfranchised they will divide upon all political questions as do intelligent, educated men...”

“We are starving for the ballot; give us the ballot in order that we may get bread, and an honest, upright living. We are born of the same parents as men; raised in the same family. We are possessed of the same loves and animosities as our brothers, and we inherit equally with them the substance of our fathers. So long as we are minors the government treats us as equals, but when we come of age, when we are capable of knowing and feeling the difference the boy becomes a free human being, responsible alone to God for his life, while the girl remains a slave...Is this just? is it not indeed, barbarous?”

Source: Susan B Anthony - Address to Congress 1884

Document 3



Brooklyn Auxillary, NYS Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women - 1894

Document 4a

“In Colorado after women were granted suffrage... Several important results followed. Both political parties were induced to put up cleaner, better men, for the women would not stand a notoriously corrupt or unclean candidate.

...It has not made women mannish; they still love their homes and their children just the same as ever, and are better able to protect themselves and their children because of the ballot.

Second, they have not become swaggerers and insolent on the streets. They still teach good manners to men ... Suffrage has increased the understanding of the community at large of the problems of good government.

It has not absolutely regenerated society, but it has improved it!

The great doctrine of the American Republic that “all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed” justifies the plea of one half of the people - the women - to exercise suffrage. The doctrine of the American Revolutionary War that taxation without representation is unendurable justifies women in exercising the suffrage.”

Source: US Senator Robert Owens Speech in Favor of Women's Suffrage 1910

Document 4b

...The question of woman suffrage should be summed up in this way: Has granting the ballot to women in the two suffrage states where they have had it for forty years brought about any great reforms or great results? No...

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Have the slums been done away with? Indeed no.

Are the streets better cleaned in the states where women vote? No, they are quites as bad as in New York City...

Have women purified politics? No...

Have women voted voluntarily? Some do; thousands are carried to the polls otherwise, they would not vote!

....Are there laws on the statue books that would give women equal pay for equal work? No, and never will be.

Are women treated with more respect in the four suffrage states than elsewhere? No...

Document 5

Twelve Reasons Why Women Should Vote

1. BECAUSE those who obey the laws should help to choose those who make the laws.
2. BECAUSE laws affect women as much as men.
3. BECAUSE laws which affect WOMEN are now passed without consulting them.
4. BECAUSE laws affecting CHILDREN should include the woman's point of view as well as the man's.
5. BECAUSE laws affecting the HOME are voted on in every session of the Legislature.
6. BECAUSE women have experience which would be helpful to legislation.
7. BECAUSE to deprive women of the vote is to lower their position in common estimation.
8. BECAUSE having the vote would increase the sense of responsibility among women toward questions of public importance.
10. BECAUSE hundreds of thousands of intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working women want the vote.
11. BECAUSE the objections against their having the vote are based on prejudice, not on reason.
12. BECAUSE to sum up all reasons in one—IT IS FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL.

VOTE FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE

GIVE THIS TO A FRIEND AND ASK HIM TO VOTE FOR IT

MASSACHUSETTS WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

Headquarters: 585 Boylston St., Boston

H. W. S. Publishing Co., Inc.

Source: Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association

(Note: The original version of this flier did not include a Reason 9.)

Document 6

“Woman suffrage would result either in a needless political muddle or in a social and political turmoil which would tend to weaken the State, to stir up discord in society and in the home, and would put obstacles in the way of progress which the wisest statesmanship might fail to overcome...

The grant of suffrage to women is repugnant to instincts that strike their roots deep in the order of nature. It runs counter to human reason, it flouts the teachings of experience and the admonitions of common sense. Although women have other capacities without numbers held in equal distinction and some in higher honor, they have never possessed or developed the political faculty. Without the counsel and guidance of men, no woman ever ruled a state wisely or well. The defect is innate [a characteristic they are born with] and one for which a cure is both impossible and not to be desired. That they lack the genius for politics is no more to their discredit than man's handiness in housewifery and in the care of infants....

Let there be no mistake as to the import of this argument. It is not in the remotest manner based upon the assumption or belief that woman is man's inferior, either intellectually or in any other way. It rests upon the established fact that man's work is different from women's work, and that in his work and in his striving in his own particular field that give man the qualifying knowledge essential to intelligent voting....”

Source: New York Times Editorial February 7th 1915

Document 7



Source: EW Gustin *By Popular Demand: Votes for Women!* (1919)