

*Orlando Sentinel* Opinion Editorial Aug 21, 2018

**TITLE: Women's Equality Day- August 26, every year since 1973 celebrates the Anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment ratified on that date in 1920**

Anniversaries are a time for reflections, some reflect on the steps towards equality for women in America. Ninety-eight years ago the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified when Tennessee became the 35th and final state needed, as well as the first and only southern state, to ratify it. Florida ratified this amendment in 1969. The amendment reads: "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."

In an article in the *Forum: The Magazine of the Florida Humanities Council* (Winter 1995/96), Harvard historian Nancy F. Cott writes about the circumstances in the 1910's leading up to the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment after decades of efforts by suffragettes. These are uncannily similar to those in 2018: industrialization, immigration and urbanization with a focus on housing, work place environment, safety and community health.

Anniversaries are also a time to look to the future and the future is looking bright as record number of women are running for elective offices at all levels of government. For example, currently 494 women have declared their intention to run for the House or the Senate compared to 312 women in 2016 and more than 80 are running for governorships (Politico, 3/8/18). Since the 2016 election, Emily's List has received over 30,000 inquires from women about campaigning (NPR 2/20/18).

The American Association of University Women, The League of Women Voters, Emily's List, Emerge America, Ready to Run, and other organizations have inspired and trained a record-breaking number of women to seek elected offices nationwide. Women are winning primaries and special elections, often by HUGE margins. Since there is strengthen in numbers, we invite and encourage Central Florida women to register and vote in both the primaries and the general election. Representative and equitable governance for all requires participation by all. In this election year it is crucial to go to the ballot box or mail-in your votes. You have the right... thanks to the 19th amendment affirming that women's constitutional right to vote can no longer be denied. Celebrate this 98th anniversary with your vote in 2018 and all upcoming elections.

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