



Representative Frances Haskell of Pierce County, one of two women legislators in 1920, introduced the resolution to ratify the amendment. The other woman serving in the House, Anna Colwell from Snohomish County, also spoke, as did Governor Hart along with other legislators. The resolution passed the House unanimously. In honor of her longtime work, Emma Smith DeVoe made special remarks. In the Senate, the vote was also unanimous and Carrie Hill, another longtime suffragist, addressed the body. Washington became the 35th state to ratify and the 12th state to approve the amendment unanimously.



Representative Anna Colwell
(State Archives photograph)

"We were justly intended to become man's equal and the men of . . . Washington are progressive enough to see this." Representative Anna Colwell, remarks before the Washington State House of Representatives, March 22, 1920.



Representative Frances Haskell
(State Archives photograph)

The 36th state, Tennessee, ratified August 18, 1920 and the amendment became effective August 26, 1920, extending the vote to most U.S. women, although citizenship for Native Americans and immigrant Asians and some voting restrictions still limited full voting rights. Nevertheless, the 19th Amendment was a landmark event for women to take their place as equals in the political life of the country.

Washington Women Lead

Washington women continue to be leaders in tribes, communities, and national, state and local offices. Two women governors have served the state. Nearly 300 women have served in the state legislature and in other state-wide elected offices including Secretary of State, Insurance Commissioner, State Auditor, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Public Lands, and Supreme Court Justices. Washington women have also been elected to the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Senate.



Governor's Mansion Foundation



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Washington Women Win the Vote

Beginning with the first session of the Territorial Legislature in 1854, women's right to vote has been an important part of the history of Washington. Spurred by activists Susan B. Anthony and Abigail Scott Duniway, Washington women achieved voting rights from 1883 to 1888, although the Territorial Supreme Court twice invalidated the right. At statehood in 1889, suffragists tried for women's voting rights but failed and an 1898 constitutional amendment likewise was not successful.



May Arkwright Hutton
(State Archives photograph)

In 1909 suffragists were in Olympia to lobby the legislature for another try at a state constitutional amendment. May Arkwright Hutton and Emma Smith DeVoe led the efforts. The Governor's Mansion was at the center of the debate when suffragists used the occasion of the housewarming for the new residence on January 28, 1909 as an opportunity to persuade legislators to vote for the amendment.

The suffragists were eventually successful and the amendment was referred to male voters. Marion Hay (1909-1913), then acting Governor because of Governor Samuel Cosgrove's illness, signed the suffrage amendment bill on February 25, 1909 with First Lady Lizzie Hay present. Both Governor Hay and his wife actively supported the cause.

First Lady Lizzie and Governor Marion Hay
(State Archives photograph)



" . . . I have every reason to believe that the voters of this state acted wisely when they voted for the amendment at the last election." Governor Marion Hay, February 11, 1911. Letter to John L. Canutt.



