

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

SJR 18

"Commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage."

The most foundational right in a democracy is the right to have your voice heard through the ballot box. Our nation is made stronger by all citizens contributing to our governance.

There have been many heroes in the fight for women's suffrage throughout history, but the movement in the United States truly took form in 1848 with the Seneca Falls Convention where eloquent speakers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott outlined their dream of an America where the votes of women would be counted.

It would take 70 years for this dream to be realized with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution on August 18, 1920, but it is clear that we are indebted to the countless women who made this happen. Our nation will forever be the land of the free and the home of the brave because the unalienable rights of women are eternally secured.

We celebrate women's suffrage and the many trailblazers that the women's movement has and will continue to produce.

Here in Alaska, a woman's right to vote was guaranteed on March 21, 1913 as the first action of the newly formed Territorial Legislature; a clear point of pride for Alaskans. In 1959, in the very first meeting of the Alaska State Legislature there were four women standing as members of the body. In 2002, Alaska sent its first female US Senator to Washington, Lisa Murkowski, and four years later we elected our first female Governor, Sarah Palin. Palin also made history as the first Alaskan to run on a Presidential ticket.

The 19th 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." A short sentence with profound and everlasting impacts worthy of significant celebration.