

2020 -- S 2002

=====  
LC003399  
=====

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020**

---

**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**JOYOUSLY CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF RHODE ISLAND'S  
RATIFICATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT, GRANTING WOMEN THE RIGHT TO  
VOTE**

Introduced By: Senators Goodwin, Lynch Prata, Gallo, Euer, and Sosnowski

Date Introduced: January 07, 2020

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, While women had the right to vote in several colonies prior to 1776, by  
2 1807 every State Constitution in the United States still denied women the right to vote. By the  
3 middle of the 19th century, numerous organizations were actively working on behalf of women's  
4 rights and equality; and

5           WHEREAS, In 1848, the Seneca Falls Convention adopted the Declaration of Sentiments  
6 which called for the right of women to vote to be secured and for equality between the sexes.  
7 Soon thereafter, suffragette activists including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
8 became politically active in support of amending the United States Constitution in order to  
9 guarantee women's right to vote throughout the United States; and

10           WHEREAS, In 1878, an amendment was introduced in the United States Congress that  
11 would have guaranteed women the right to vote, but it failed to pass. By the late 19th century,  
12 new states and territories in the American West began to grant women the right to vote; and

13           WHEREAS, In the early 20th century, momentum began to grow across the country in  
14 favor of passing the 19th amendment, especially as a result of the United States entry in World  
15 War I, and the patriotic support of that endeavor by the National American Women Suffrage  
16 Association. The National Woman's Party organized marches, demonstrations, and hunger  
17 strikes, and poignantly juxtaposed the contradiction of fighting for democracy abroad while  
18 denying women the right to vote at home; and

19           WHEREAS, Public opinion began to move in favor of ratifying the 19th Amendment,

1 with President Wilson announcing his support in 1918. In 1919, the 19th Amendment passed  
2 Congress and was adopted in 1920, immediately enfranchising 26 million American women; and

3 WHEREAS, In Rhode Island, the Women's Suffrage movement began in earnest in 1868,  
4 when the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association was organized by Paulina Wright Davis  
5 and Elizabeth Buffam Chace as they returned from the organizational meeting of the New  
6 England Suffrage Association in Boston. A year later, the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage  
7 Association would host the National convention of the National Women's Suffrage Association in  
8 Newport; and

9 WHEREAS, For over forty years, the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association was  
10 the sole entity advocating for the right of women to vote in Rhode Island. Each year they  
11 petitioned the Rhode Island General Assembly to submit a constitutional amendment in support  
12 of women's suffrage. Momentum in support of passage of the 19th Amendment grew  
13 exponentially in Rhode Island culminating with the Rhode Island General Assembly's passage of  
14 the Resolution on January 6, 1920, and Rhode Island Governor R. Livingston Beeckman signing  
15 the Resolution into law on January 7, 1920; and

16 WHEREAS, On the historic date of January 6, 1920, suffrage supporters packed the State  
17 House, waiting for the House to convene at 12:00 in the afternoon. After the Senate was  
18 summoned to meet with the House of Representatives in Grand Committee, the Governor read his  
19 message to the State in which he recommended ratification. Shortly thereafter, the resolution was  
20 passed with 89 votes in support and only three votes in dissent. The resolution then advanced to  
21 the Senate where it was passed by voice vote with only one dissenting vote. With that, history  
22 was made, and a magnificent victory dinner was held for the important suffragette leaders and  
23 supporters who had fought so tirelessly and valiantly over the prior fifty years in support of  
24 women's equality and their right to vote. The following day, on January 7, 1920, Governor  
25 Beeckman put an exclamation point on what is one of the most momentous occasions in Rhode  
26 Island history when he signed the Ratification Resolution; now, therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
28 hereby joyously celebrates the 100th Anniversary of Rhode Island's ratification of the 19th  
29 Amendment, granting women the right to vote; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
2 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Ms. Jane Koster, President of the League of  
3 Women Voters, Rhode Island.

=====  
LC003399  
=====