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HOUSE BILL 2007

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representative Kagi

1 AN ACT Relating to commemorating the centennial of national  
2 women's suffrage; adding a new chapter to Title 27 RCW; and providing  
3 an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** FINDINGS AND INTENT. On August 26, 1920,  
6 with the action of the Tennessee legislature, the Nineteenth  
7 Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified,  
8 guaranteeing women throughout the country the right to vote. The  
9 introduction, passage, and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment  
10 were the result of decades of work and struggle by women's voting  
11 rights advocates, throughout the United States, with people from  
12 Washington state providing significant leadership.

13 In 1854, six years after the landmark women's rights convention  
14 in Seneca Falls, New York, the Washington territorial legislature  
15 initially considered enacting women's right to vote. Susan B. Anthony  
16 visited Washington Territory in 1871, and addressed the Washington  
17 Territorial Legislature, the first woman in the country to address a  
18 legislative body. This spurred the creation of many women's right to  
19 vote associations in Washington and in other states.

20 State women's right to vote legislation eventually passed the  
21 Washington Territorial Legislature twice, but each time was found

1 unconstitutional by the Territorial Supreme Court. With the 1910  
2 approval of a state constitutional amendment by the male voters of  
3 the state, Washington became the first state in the twentieth  
4 century, and the fifth state overall, to enact women's right to vote  
5 at the state level.

6 In 2009, the state of Washington posthumously awarded its highest  
7 honor, the medal of merit, to the two key leaders of the Washington  
8 women's right to vote movement, Emma Smith DeVoe and Mae Arkwright  
9 Hutton.

10 The path to women's suffrage was blazed by western states.  
11 Washington followed Wyoming (1890), Colorado (1893), Utah (1870), and  
12 Idaho (1896), and was immediately succeeded by California (1911) and  
13 Oregon (1912), in establishing women's right to vote.

14 Washington was a major leader in the movement for nationwide  
15 women's right to vote. Washington was the first state in the  
16 twentieth century to fully enfranchise women, and inspired the  
17 nationwide campaign that soon brought success in many western states  
18 and the territory of Alaska, culminating in the Nineteenth Amendment  
19 to the United States Constitution providing for women throughout the  
20 country to vote.

21 In 2010, the Washington women's history consortium provided  
22 leadership for statewide commemoration of the centennial of  
23 Washington state women's right to vote, sponsoring and coordinating a  
24 wide range of activities, including preparation of a major traveling  
25 exhibit.

26 The centennial of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the  
27 United States Constitution, in 2020, offers still greater  
28 opportunities for Washingtonians to commemorate and educate  
29 themselves about the importance of voting and civic engagement, the  
30 historic efforts of the women's right to vote movement in Washington  
31 and throughout the country, and the subsequent impacts of  
32 enfranchising women on life in Washington and the United States.

33 Therefore, the legislature finds it beneficial to begin the  
34 process of preparing for statewide commemoration in 2020 of the  
35 centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States  
36 Constitution, which established the right to vote for women  
37 throughout the country.

38 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** DUTIES OF CONSORTIUM. The Washington  
39 women's history consortium shall:

1 (1) Provide leadership for a 2020 statewide commemoration of the  
2 centennial of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the  
3 United States Constitution;

4 (2) Immediately begin preparations for this statewide  
5 commemoration, to include but not be limited to:

6 (a) Consulting with a wide variety of organizations,  
7 institutions, public agencies, and the general public about the  
8 content and conduct of this statewide commemoration;

9 (b) Developing and encouraging others to develop educational  
10 opportunities for the public to learn about the active leadership  
11 role of Washingtonians in achieving the nationwide right to vote for  
12 women;

13 (c) Developing and encouraging educational opportunities about  
14 the importance of voting in the context of women gaining the right to  
15 vote;

16 (d) Developing and encouraging educational opportunities about  
17 the subsequent long-term impacts of women gaining the right to vote;  
18 and

19 (e) Planning, coordinating, and publicizing events and  
20 informational materials throughout the state commemorating this  
21 centennial;

22 (3) Create and distribute a portfolio of public humanities  
23 programs, and encourage others to also do this, to engage the  
24 citizens of Washington with important aspects of the women's right to  
25 vote movement;

26 (4) Encourage private organizations and local governments to  
27 organize and participate in activities commemorating the centennial  
28 of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

29 (5) Administer a grant program for public agencies, educational  
30 institutions, and organizations exempt from taxation under Title 26  
31 Sec. 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue code to assist with  
32 their commemoration activities.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** POWERS OF CONSORTIUM. The consortium has  
34 the following powers, and may exercise them as necessary to carry out  
35 its duties:

36 (1) To appoint task forces or advisory committees;

37 (2) To work with staff appointed by the Washington state  
38 historical society;

39 (3) To enter into agreements or contracts; and

1 (4) To solicit, accept, use, and dispose of grants and gifts.

2 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** REIMBURSEMENT. (1) Legislative members  
3 serving on the consortium or any task forces or advisory committees  
4 created to further the purpose of the consortium must be reimbursed  
5 for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

6 (2) State and local government agency members must be reimbursed  
7 pursuant to the reimbursement policies of their respective agency or  
8 institution.

9 (3) Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for  
10 travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on  
11 behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization.  
12 Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to  
13 chapter 43.03 RCW.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** REPORT TO GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE. The  
15 consortium must report annually by December 1st to the governor and  
16 the legislature on the work of the consortium, together with any  
17 recommendations to the governor and legislature.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** EXPIRATION DATE. This chapter expires July  
19 1, 2021.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 6 of this act  
21 constitute a new chapter in Title 27 RCW.

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