



State of Wisconsin
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

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2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 114

February 13, 2024 - Introduced by Senators BALLWEG, ROYS, LARSON, SPREITZER, AGARD, CARPENTER and PFAFF, cosponsored by Representatives DITTRICH, SUBECK, DONOVAN, C. ANDERSON, BARE, ROZAR, DRAKE, EMERSON, JOERS, BINSFELD, STUBBS, SINICKI, MURSAU, RATCLIFF, NEUBAUER, MOORE OMOKUNDE, O'CONNOR, CLANCY, SHANKLAND, PALMERI, CONLEY, TRANEL, SCHUTT and ARMSTRONG. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

AUTHORS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming March 2024 as Women's History Month.

2 Whereas, American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have
3 made historic contributions to our nation in countless recorded and unrecorded
4 ways; and

5 Whereas, the Wisconsin Legislature granted property rights to married women
6 in 1850; and

7 Whereas, in 1869, the first women graduated from the University of Wisconsin.
8 This same year, the Wisconsin Legislature passed a law allowing women to run for
9 school boards and other elective school offices, though they could not vote in school
10 board elections until 1884; and

11 Whereas, in the campaign for Women's Suffrage, Wisconsin produced notable
12 suffragists such as Olympia Brown of Racine, Clara Bewick Colby of Madison, Carrie
13 Chapman Catt of Ripon, Jessie Jack Hooper of Oshkosh, Ada James of Richland
14 Center, and Belle Case La Follette of Baraboo; and

1 Whereas, Wisconsin is part of the original 36 states to ratify the 19th
2 Amendment to the United States Constitution, which provides, “The right of citizens
3 of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or
4 by any State on account of sex,” and holds the distinction of being the first state to
5 ratify, on June 10, 1919, and formally certify its ratification papers in Washington,
6 D.C.; and

7 Whereas, in July 1921, after decades of campaigning by women for voting and
8 other rights, Wisconsin passed the nation’s first women’s equal rights law, declaring
9 “Women shall have the same rights and privileges under the law as men,” including
10 “holding office”—affirming women’s right to hold any public office; and

11 Whereas, a 1923 survey of Wisconsin cities and villages by the University of
12 Wisconsin’s Municipal Information Bureau identified more than 400 women in
13 public office, of whom approximately half sat on school and library boards and who
14 also included Wisconsin’s first female mayor, county supervisor, sheriff, nine
15 alderwomen, 12 village trustees, and dozens of clerks and treasurers; and

16 Whereas, in 1925, three women, Representatives Mildred Barber of Wausau,
17 Hellen Brooks of Caloma, and Helen Thompson of Park Falls, were the first female
18 assembly representatives to be elected to the Wisconsin Legislature; and

19 Whereas, Wisconsin amended its own constitution in 1934 to include women’s
20 suffrage; and

21 Whereas, in 1983, the Wisconsin Women’s Council became a permanent state
22 agency governed by a bipartisan board appointed by the governor and legislative
23 leaders; and

24 Whereas, in 2023, a total of 41 women took their seats in the state assembly and
25 senate, the most ever in Wisconsin history; and

1 Whereas, the role of American women continues to evolve, and their positive
2 contributions to our culture, society, and government continue to grow and inspire
3 future generations; and

4 Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, whether in their homes,
5 in their workplaces, in schools, in the community, in the courts, or during wartime,
6 women have fought for themselves, their families, and all people of the United
7 States; and

8 Whereas, since the American Revolution, women have been vital to the mission
9 of the Armed Forces, with nearly 2,000 Wisconsin women serving on active duty and
10 over 30,000 women veterans from Wisconsin representing every branch of service;
11 and

12 Whereas, American women have played and continue to play a critical
13 economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of life and constitute a significant
14 portion of the labor force working inside and outside the home, with women now
15 representing approximately half of the workforce of the United States and owning
16 more than 10 million businesses; and

17 Whereas, according to U.S. Census Bureau data, women are at the helm of
18 about 18 percent of all employer firms located in Wisconsin; and

19 Whereas, the women of Wisconsin have been and continue to be leaders in the
20 forefront of international affairs, social change efforts, education, journalism,
21 literature, art, film, technology, math, science, athletics, and other fields including,
22 but not limited to, Golda Meir, who grew up in Milwaukee, was the Prime Minister
23 of Israel from 1969-1974; Nobel Peace Prize winner and Liberian president, Ellen
24 Johnson Sirleaf, who attended school in Madison, was the first female head of state
25 of any African country; Vel Phillips, a woman of many firsts, was the first Black

1 woman to graduate from the University of Wisconsin Law School, the first woman
2 alder elected to the Common Council of Milwaukee, the first woman judge in
3 Milwaukee County, the first African American to serve in Wisconsin's judiciary, and
4 the first woman elected as Wisconsin's Secretary of State; Dickey Chapelle was the
5 first female American war correspondent to parachute with American troops and the
6 first killed covering combat; Electa "Wuhwehweeemeew" Quinney was
7 Wisconsin's first public schoolteacher; Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the "Little
8 House" book series, hails from Pepin; Lorraine Hansbury, playwright for *A Raisin in
9 the Sun* was the first Black woman to have a play produced on Broadway; Georgia
10 O'Keeffe of Sun Prairie is a major American artist of the 20th century who developed
11 a unique approach to abstract painting that reflected the landscapes around her; and
12 Bonnie Blair is a world record-holding speed skater, a six-time Olympic medalist,
13 and the most decorated woman in Winter Olympic history; and

14 Whereas, despite the advancements of women in the United States, much
15 remains to be done to ensure that women realize their full potential as equal
16 members of society in the United States; and

17 Whereas, National Women's History Month recognizes and spreads awareness
18 of the importance of women in the history of Wisconsin and the United States; now,
19 therefore, be it

20 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the month of March
21 2024 shall be designated as Women's History Month.

22 (END)