



Ohio Women Vote: 100 Years of Change

Panel 1. Introduction

Women in Ohio and across the nation began campaigning for the right to vote before the Civil War. They achieved a major victory when the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920. Women's reasons for wanting to vote varied depending on their personal identities, but they all believed that voting would give them the power to change every aspect of their lives, influence social change, and improve their communities, their country, and the world.

The 19th Amendment was not the end of women's activism, it was the beginning. Voting enabled women to further their education, pursue careers, change laws, create social service and cultural organizations, and run for office themselves.

Despite their common goal, suffragists and future activists still brought common prejudices to their work. White women often discounted problems that they did not experience, so women of color had to fight to be sure that their voices were heard. Even after the passage of the 19th Amendment, women of color had to speak out to end discrimination that still barred American Indian women, Asian American women, African American women, and many Latinas from voting.

We invite you to read about Ohio women's experiences as activists in their own words. What motivated and continues to motivate women to speak out? How has the experience of women's activism changed or not changed over time? What barriers have women faced and do they still face? Do women always agree? See what these women have achieved and think about how you might join them to shape the future.

Panel 2. What does it mean to be a woman?

In 1851, Sojourner Truth quieted hecklers at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, with a powerful speech. She pointed out that class, race, and life experiences such as motherhood and work, shape how womanhood is defined. From the 1800s to the present, women express different views about their roles.

Quotes: Amelia Bloomer, Frances Dana Gage, Erma Bombeck, Julia Applegate

Panel 3. Why is the vote so important?

Throughout the long fight for the right to vote, women repeatedly explained that being able to cast a ballot was a fundamental right of all citizens no matter their gender.

Quotes: Amelia Bloomer, Frances Dana Gage, Viola D. Romans, Natalie Clifford Barney

Panel 4. What do you do with your vote?

Before they could vote many women participated in public life. Victoria Woodhull was notable for running for President of the United States on the Equal Rights Party ticket in 1872. However, most women activists believed the power to vote was key to improving every aspect of their lives, including social changes, protecting children, pursuing higher education and careers, and successfully running for office themselves.

Quotes: Frances Dana Gage, Carrie Williams Clifford, Florence Ellinwood Allen

Panel 5. How do you speak out?

Women advocate for their rights in many ways, from parades to publications to simply saying something when they see injustice. Change is accomplished when women show up, speak up, or pick up a pen to make their individual voices heard.

Quotes: Rhiannon Childs, Lucy Stone, Jane Elizabeth Jones, Mary Church Terrell, Gloria Steinem

Panel 6. How do you experience discrimination?

All women face gender bias, but many also experience discrimination based on identities such as race, sexual orientation, or physical ability. Frequently excluded from white women's activism, women of color advocated for and intersectional approach to activism that addresses all forms of discrimination when fighting for gender equality.

Quotes: Mary Church Terrell, Constance Curtis Nichols, Connie Schultz, Julia Applegate

Panel 7. What other issues do you work for?

Many suffragists campaigned for other issues in addition to the vote, particularly banning the sale of alcohol, the abolition of slavery, and African American rights. Women continue to be outspoken advocates on a wide range of political and social issues that impact women of all races.

Quotes: Mary Church Terrell, Natalie Clifford Barney, Gloria Steinem, Joyce Beatty

Panel 8. How do women support each other?

Women have always had different opinions about the issues that affect them and how to achieve equality. But most advocate for working together, listening to one another, and standing up for all women, to protect everyone's rights and help them succeed.

Quotes: Lucy Stone, Frances Payne Bolton, Gloria Steinem speaking about her grandmother, Pauline Steinem, Rhiannon Childs, Paula Haines

Panel 9. What does it mean to be a feminist?

Merriam-Webster defines feminism as “the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes,” and it has been used to label people fighting for gender equality. Although the term has often held negative connotations, activists have continued to embrace feminism and define it on their own terms.

Quotes: Jane Elizabeth Jones, Connie Schultz, Gloria Steinem, Paula Haines

Panel 10. How do generations of activists influence each other?

Panel 11. What does more than 100 years of women’s activism make possible?

Included:

- a. Jo Ann Davidson
- b. Chief Glenna Wallace
- c. Maya Lin
- d. Jerrie Mock
- e. Toni Morrison
- f. Judith Resnik
- g. Celeste Ng
- h. Rose Lavelle
- i. Simone Biles
- j. Sara Abou Rashed
- k. Ella Stewart

Panel 12. Conclusion: What do you want to say to future generations of women?

Quotes: Hallie Q. Brown, Georgia Hopley, Katie Smith, Rhiannon Childs