

## *A Chronology of American Suffrage 1776-2002*

**1776:** Suffrage in the former colonies is mainly male and based mostly on property ownership, with some states imposing religious restrictions.

**1787:** The newly-adopted Constitution reserves for states the power to regulate their own suffrage laws. These favor white, male property owners.

**1848:** The plight of women is denounced by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at a gathering of 100 women's rights advocates in Seneca Falls, NY. Stanton reads a proclamation asserting "all men and women are created equal."

**1791:** Vermont establishes universal male suffrage, abandoning the property-owning requirement.

**1866:** An act defining citizenship and prohibiting discrimination based on race or previous condition of servitude is vetoed by President Andrew Johnson. The Congress overrides Johnson's veto.

**1868:** The Fourteenth Amendment establishes that all persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside, and that these citizens may not be deprived of the customary privileges, including suffrage.

**1872:** Susan B. Anthony is arrested two weeks after voting in the presidential election. She is found guilty but refuses to pay the assessed fine.

**1876:** Many states adopt measures such as poll taxes, literacy tests and grandfather clauses in order to restrict the eligibility of African-Americans and other minorities to vote. Arkansas adopts its poll tax in 1892.

**1931:** Arkansan Hattie Caraway assumes her husband's U.S. Senate seat after his death, becoming the first female U.S. Senator. She was elected in her own right in 1932.

**1923:** Frances Hunt and Erie Chambers become the first women elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives.

**1940:** In the Nationality Act, Congress reaffirms its earlier extension of full citizenship, including voting right, to Native Americans. The states of Arizona and New Mexico bar them from voting because they do not pay property taxes.

**1947:** Miguel Trujillo, a member of Isleta Pueblo and former Marine, successfully sues the state of New Mexico for the right to vote. Trujillo argues that since Native Americans in fact pay most forms of taxes, they are subject to taxation without representation if denied the franchise.

**1943:** Georgia lowers its voting age from 21 to 18 in state and local elections.

**1950:** The Equal Rights Amendment, first introduced in Congress in 1923, is approved by the U.S. Senate but with a rider that nullifies its equal rights provisions.

**1964:** The Twenty-fourth Amendment, banning the poll tax as an obstacle to voting, is ratified; The Civil Rights Act of 1964 guarantees the right to register to vote without reprisal.

**1965:** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads a march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capitol at Montgomery, protesting the denial of voting rights to African Americans; the Voting Rights Act, approved by Congress in August, applies nationwide prohibition against the denial or abridgment of the right to vote.

**1972:** Jerry Jewel, Henry Wilkins, Richard Mays and William Townsend become the first African-Americans elected to the Arkansas Legislature since 1892.

**1971:** The 26th Amendment to the Constitution lowers the voting age to 18.

**1993:** President Bill Clinton signs the National Voter Registration Act, popularly known as the "Motor Voter Act", which made it easier for all Americans to register to vote and to maintain their voter registration.

**2002:** The Help America Vote Act is signed into law by President George W. Bush. The complex measure is designed to improve the administration of elections in the United States.