

The League of Women Voters of Utah Election Issue

November 1, 2023



‘The Movement Is Not Over’

By Katharine Biele, LWV Utah President



Just in case you’re wondering, we’re talking about the women’s movement, the movement to protect democracy, to fight for our voting rights, our futures and those of our children.

In a recent leadership call, our national president Dr. Deborah Turner warned us not to give up. “This is a movement for civil rights, for equality, and specifically for equity, for women’s place in all walks of life and all places of leadership that is moving and we are moving with it.”

Many of you wanted to join the League in Washington, D.C., for the March on Washington, which fell on what we now call Women’s Inequality Day – August 26. The day was designated in 1973 in commemoration of the 1920 certification of the 19th Amendment. The League was at the podium, but communication came too late to arrange transportation from Utah. Nonetheless, we engaged in a robust digital campaign “raising the hypocrisy of equality for women without full autonomy of their own bodies, without an era and without Federal voting rights.” Our thanks goes to Communications Director Martha Olson.

The Utah League remains committed to work alongside Planned Parenthood of Utah to that end.

Of course, we await the Utah Supreme Court’s rulings on PP’s lawsuit against the trigger law ban, and our own lawsuit against the legislature’s arrogant repeal of Proposition 4 and its subsequent gerrymandered maps.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act is being reintroduced in the House and the League fully supports the effort. Tell your congressmen that we expect passage soon.

I am in awe of our board this term as they work tirelessly to move our mission forward. The Natural Resources committee completed an in-depth study on water, punctuated by two video presentations on Great Salt Lake and the Colorado River. Both will be available on the LWV Utah website.

Cynthia Phillips of Legislative Action and Julia Kretschmar of Local Leagues joined me and our fledgling Washington County League during the legislative's interim trip to St. George. League members got to meet their legislators and lawmakers noted the Observer buttons in the audience. Legislative Action is for every one of us, so please let Cynthia know if you'd like to monitor any of the sessions.

We have also initiated a Happenings on the Hill report during interim, and there are more to come.

Katie Dahl has been working hard at getting responses to our candidate questions in VOTE411. The election is right around the corner, and it's a big one – not only for state office but also our many municipalities.

Two of our studies are underway – an update to the 2020 study on Utah's Abortion Laws, and a new study on how the Utah Fits All Scholarship (vouchers) will affect public schools.

For all the great work we do, the Utah League has been awarded a \$10,000 grant to demonstrate how we are continuing to Make Democracy Work. Several of our local leagues are participating, and we expect the results to bring greater recognition to the League.

I don't think I need to remind anyone that we are not only nonpartisan but encourage bipartisan cooperation in all our activities. We see every day how partisan polarization is hurting our country.

Finally, Catherine Weller and I have worked on a holiday present for you. Author and comedian Ben Sheehan will join us at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 5 to discuss his book "OMG WTF Does the Constitution Actually Say?" If you think you know, think again. His book is delightfully readable and eminently educational. I'm sure you know where to get a copy. More on this later.

Thank you for allowing me the honor to represent you and the League.



2023 Election: Your Voice Is More Important Than Ever

By Katie Dahl, LWV Utah Voter Services Director



"Aspen Trees in Utah By Phil Konstantin" by Officer Phil is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

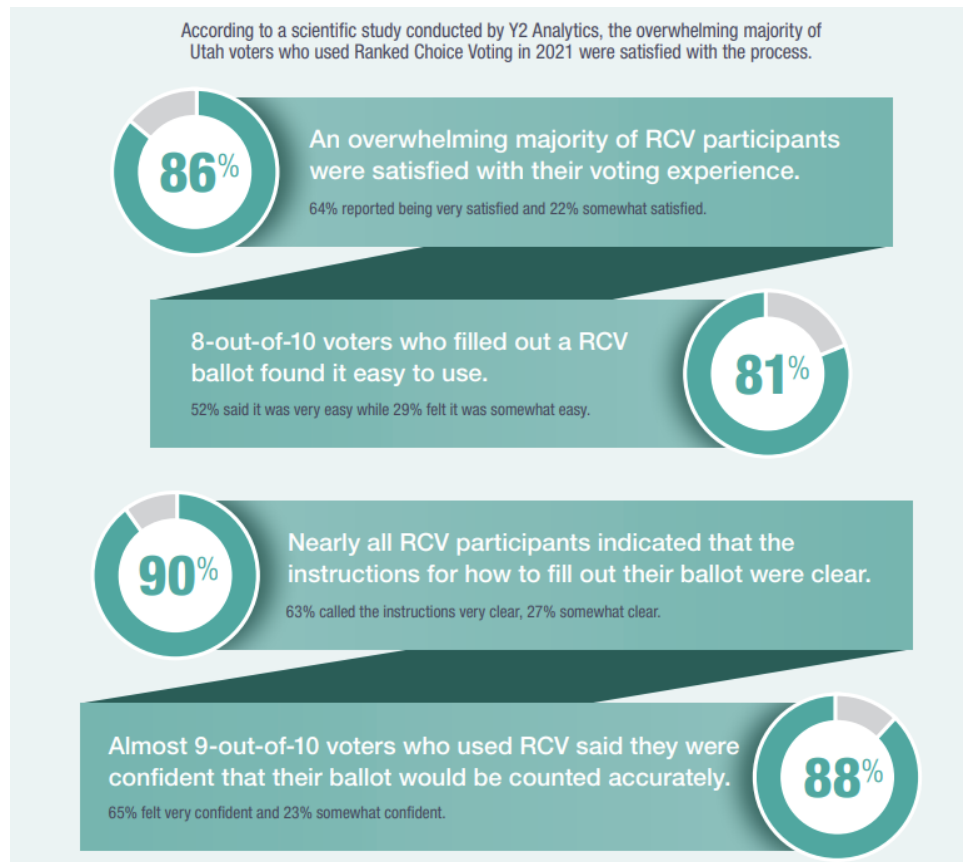
There's an election, and it's later than usual

The election period starts October 31, when election officials mail ballots to voters. Then it heats up Tuesday, November 7, when in-person early voting sites open. Utah's general election finishes up on Tuesday, November 21. The dates are later than usual because of the unexpected resignation of Congressman Chris Stewart in the 2nd Congressional District before completion of his term. The municipal elections are included in this schedule shift.

To learn more about the CD2 candidates, go to Vote411.org where most of the candidates have provided answers to questions from the League of Women Voters of Utah about their positions and background. And by the way, there is no ranked choice voting yet for this federal race. The same concerns about plurality outcomes we've seen in the past still apply here.

The overwhelming set of outcomes for this general election are happening in our backyards. City council and mayoral races are playing out all over the state and the effects will absolutely impact what happens in our communities. There are also ballot questions in some cases, for example in Brighton, where voters will decide whether to increase the sales tax on resorts. In Bluffdale, voters will decide whether the council had the authority to increase taxes and therefore funding for the fire and police protection fund there.

Don't forget: in Utah, voters can register and vote through the last day of the election. Just be sure to take the [required ID](#) to a voting location.



Ranked Choice Voting: How to choose who to choose

In those moments when it's tough to decide which candidate you'll choose, it may be a relief to know that in many communities you can rank order your choices instead of picking just one. What this means for you is that if your first choice isn't likely to win, you haven't thrown away your vote by picking them — because your second choice will pop into the tabulation if that first choice bombs in the first round. These are the cities using a ranked ballot in November: Genola, Heber City, Lehi, Kearns, Magna, Midvale, Millcreek, Payson, Salt Lake City, South Salt Lake, Vineyard, and Woodland Hills.

Utah is far from alone in using ranked choice voting. According to FairVote, a national organization that has advocated for ranked choice voting for 30 years, 51 American jurisdictions have ranked choice voting in place today, including statewide races in two states.

In Utah, we passed a pilot program in 2018 for the RCV method that is set to expire in 2025. So far, surveys have shown that [most voters](#) appreciate the option of ranking candidates.

Sen. Mitt Romney recently shared support for ranked choice voting, stating “the evidence suggests it would be a superior way to proceed.”



VOTE411 Is a Key Tool for Your Voting Plan

1. Check your registration and/or register to vote. It takes two minutes! Get started using VOTE411's easy online tool.
2. Learn about early voting options. VOTE411
3. Explore your day-of voting options. VOTE411
4. Research candidates. Learn more about ballot measures and where candidates stand on the issues. VOTE411
5. Share your plans. Tell your friends and family and encourage them to make a voting plan at VOTE411.org.

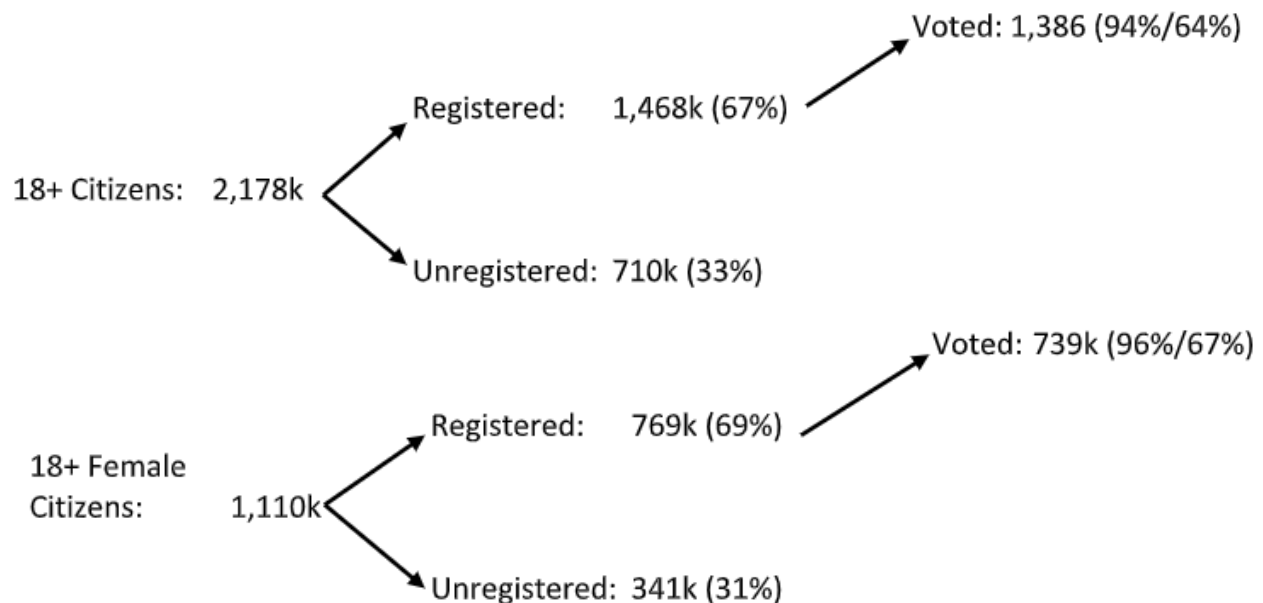
Think Your Vote Doesn't Matter? Think Again!

By Martha Olson, LWV Utah Communications Director

As a relatively new resident of Utah, I am totally amazed and thrilled at how easy it is to vote in this state. It's easy to register — just check the box at the DMV or go to [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) or vote.utah.gov. Once you are registered, your ballot is mailed to you. Once you have the ballot, VOTE411.org makes it easy to research candidates. And once you fill out the ballot, just mail or drop in an easy-to-find ballot box. If you like to vote in person, Utah makes that possible as well.

Yet, nearly 33 percent of Utah's eligible voters are not registered, one of the lowest registration rates in the nation. When asked why, the most often cited reason is that people think their vote just doesn't count.

Let's look at Utah's 2022 numbers:



Only 67 percent of Utah's eligible voters are registered. The good news is that, of those, 94 percent voted in 2022. However, only 64 percent of those eligible actually voted. The statistics are similar, but a bit better for women.

That means 792,000 people who *could* have voted in Utah *didn't*. Combined, that group is fully 57 percent the size of voters — large enough to swing any election, especially at a local level where the numbers get smaller and margins tighter.

Next time someone worries that their vote won't really count in the end — just do the math!

SL League Partners with Canyons School District Students

By Shauna Bona, LWV Salt Lake President



CAPS class

Opinions abound as to why more young people in Salt Lake County don't vote. What we lack are data and insights that come directly from youth voters themselves. To fill this void, the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake (LWVSL) is partnering with students in Canyons School District's Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program to conduct market research about youth attitudes toward voting.

Led locally by teacher/facilitator David G. Smith, CAPS is a national program that enables high school students to engage in industry-centered projects. The idea is that by trusting the next generation to "take care of the 10th thing on their to-do list," businesses can help students gain confidence and knowledge that will propel their professional journeys.

As Smith puts it, the program wants to give young professionals "opportunity handshakes, not handouts."

Recognizing an opportunity to support both students and the League's mission, LWVSL member Lori Jones introduced our local League to Smith and the CAPS program. As a retired school administrator and director of the Utah League's Natural Resources Group, she recognized the potential of giving students an opportunity to apply their talents to real-world challenges that matter to their futures.

The next step was to identify a project that would be meaningful to both the students and the League and then present it to the CAPS class on "Pitch Day."

We decided to pitch a Local Youth Voting Market Research project to help us understand how 16-to-18-year-olds in the Canyons School District feel about voting. Led by high school senior and project leader Trinity Williams, the CAPS students will survey potential voters in their civics

classes, analyze their results and compare them to then present findings and recommendations to the LWVSL board and Voter Services team in December.

As part of this project, students will also assess national, state and county data about youth participation in elections and will compare what they learn locally to the results of broader studies and research. This is where LWVSL's Voter Services intern, Iragi Nshangalume, comes into the picture.

As a fellow with 18by Votes' Exploring Youth Engagement (EYE) Research project, Nshangalume spent last summer studying youth participation at the national and state levels. Earlier this month she presented a briefing about her project to the CAPS class. Her purpose was not only to share results but also to provide an example of research methodology and presentation.

As part of her internship, Nshangalume, who is also a student at the University of Utah, will provide mentorship to the CAPS team.

America Has a Youth Voting Problem & an Enormous Opportunity



By Iragi Nshangalume, Youth Civic Engagement Intern, LWV Salt Lake

Historically, young people (18-24) have not been voting at high rates, compared to an older voter demographic (25-65+). Consequently, youth voter turnout has been a hot topic over the last couple of years. Many organizations have hypothesized as to why this is. Research has concluded that empowering youth voter turnouts through civic education, civic participation and embracement are fundamental parts of increasing youth voter turnout.

There Is Hope

The study on Broadening Youth Voting done by Tufts University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) found that, although youth voter turnouts are exceptionally low, they have been rising. The 2022 Midterm youth voter turnout was the second highest, in 30 years, while the 2020 elections had the highest — 50 percent youth voter turnout.

Over the last several months, I participated as a research fellow with [18by Vote](#), a nonpartisan youth-led organization that helps new and rising voters understand how, when, and why to vote, in conducting a study to Explore Youth Engagement (EYE). The EYE research, undertaken in partnership with CIRCLE and Emerson College, consisted of a nationwide survey of people ages 17 to 20 followed by one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions here in Utah and other states.

Across the board, although study participants appeared to know the importance of voting, they reported feeling that they are not taken seriously nor welcomed. Some common findings and related takeaways included the importance of enabling youth to participate in civic opportunities and understanding youths' mental capacities. It also conveyed the need for all to focus and convert attention into action.

Enabling Youth To Participate

Many youths recall the biggest hurdle being the inconvenience and requirements for voting. Restrictive voting laws and regulations combined with inadequate civic education make for low civic participation in youth. Although Utah receives good scores for ease of voting, there remain significant opportunities to improve civic education in our schools. Initiatives introduced by the [Utah Civic Learning Collaborative](#), in tandem with those offered by the League of Women Voters and other civic organizations, can help foster early awareness and sustained engagement. Also creating opportunities where youth can gain meaningful leadership opportunities, such as internships, shadowing policymakers, and volunteering with civic organizations and campaigns, will provide youth substantive training and experience. This will enable youth to feel more competent and qualified for additional opportunities.

Mental Health

Youth who encounter preconceptions of their physical attributes and marginalized identities experience hostilities in civic spaces. Empowering youth to show up as their genuine selves can contribute to a sense of safety and comfort for their well-being, helping to sustain their civic engagement.

Converting Attention into Action

Lastly, the research concluded that taking effective actions to promote change is a vital part of encouraging youth. We can begin with educating youth on how to cast an informed ballot by understanding which issues are important to them and how to research candidates and existing policymakers to identify those whose views and positions align with their own. Then educate them on the mechanics and importance of making a plan to vote.

Furthermore, teach youths how to assemble in advocacy with others by instructing them how to research and get connected with like-minded civic groups and organizations that may be already at the front lines of activism. Empowering youths to organize and assemble in unison to bring attention to issues while learning to express their concerns with conviction and civility will also be critical to boost their influence on issues and increase turnout.

Path Forward To Creating & Sustaining Youth Civic Engagement

The path forward falls on everyone including individuals, educators, families, policymakers, and organizations such as the League of Women Voters. Voting and civic participation are more than just casting a ballot, but a way to show commitment and regard to one another.

As a participating fellow of the EYE Research Collective and intern for the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake, I will be working with our youth civic engagement committee to better understand key findings and recommendations from this research to help the League create and advance effective youth civic engagement programs in our local school districts.

To learn more about 18by Vote's Exploring Youth Engagement Research Collective, click [here](#).

Candidate Forums Provide Opportunity to Discuss Issues

By Nickie Nelson, LWV Davis President

The League of Women Voters of Davis County conducted Meet the Candidate Forums for six Davis County City Council elections: Woods Cross Primary, West Bountiful, Bountiful, Syracuse, North Salt Lake and Fruit Heights. Our format is a half-hour Meet and Greet followed by a one-hour panel where each candidate has two minutes for an opening statement, after which we proceed to a series of timed questions, and then give the candidates one minute for their conclusion. We rotate through the candidates so that each candidate has at least one chance to answer the question first. Volunteers collect questions from the audience on 3x5 cards and we try to get to as many of those as possible. Davis County League has co-hosted these with our cities for many years. In most cities, we're assisted by the Youth Council and this year we had participation by Boy Scout Troop 78 and Girl Scout Troop 914. Candidates and attendees express gratitude for the opportunity to meet in person in a structured, non-partisan setting with unbiased questions.

Unfortunately, two cities had to cancel the Meet the Candidate events after so many candidates withdrew that city council elections were canceled. City councils are where many state and federal representatives begin their elected careers, and we hope the lack of interest in serving does not mean the current political climate is discouraging citizens from running for office.

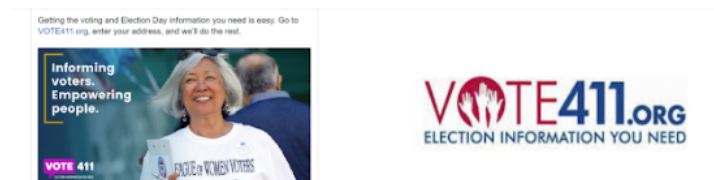


Major Turnout for Weber County Debates/Candidate Forums

By Terri McCulloch, LWV Weber President

The Weber League has or will hold seven local debates for the general election in cities within Weber County. We also held four debates in cities with numerous candidates for the primary. These are live-streamed on Facebook and put on YouTube due to so many requests from people who don't use social media. The turnout this year has been amazing. We had about 200 people at the Ogden City Council and mayoral debate for the primary and the other three had filled rooms and often required more chairs. It is very refreshing to see so many people interested in running and attending informational events. We consider this year to be a fantastic success.

We send out a flier to each candidate and to each city office. An example is below and it has been very well received. We also have a great rapport with the newspaper and every debate has been reported in the local paper. Weber also engaged the "Ogdenite" (a small online event and information source) to put out notifications. We hope to build on this even more next year.



Roy City Council

November 1, 2023

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Roy Library

Council Candidates

Ann Jackson
Joe Paul
Claude Payne
Ben Pearson
Bryon Saxton
Jeremy Thompson



Voter Registration Activities Catch Fire

By Karen Thurber, LWV Weber Voter Services Director

We have had a great year (so far!) registering and educating voters. To date, the Weber League registered over 500 voters at Weber County events and have helped the Salt Lake League register more than 1,500 voters at the Utah Pride Festival and Naturalization Ceremonies. We decided to move the Farmers Market booth to bi-weekly to improve results and give volunteers a better experience. We also assisted the Davis League at the county's Pride Festival. Our biggest "haul" came at Weber State's Block Party on September 1, with 82 registrations. Our second biggest day was at Ogden Pride with 61 registrations.



One of the reasons folks do not register or vote is that they don't feel "informed" and don't know where to get accurate, unbiased information. Now that we have VOTE411, we have a great answer to this concern and have found that voters are responding to it enthusiastically.

We have put 2,000 stickers promoting VOTE411 on disposable coffee cups from local coffee shops, hung up 50 posters in downtown areas, and passed out 2,000 postcards at events. We have had a great response from voters, which makes it worthwhile.

We are also very excited that the coupon book that goes to each home in the mail has agreed to put a VOTE411 article in it for the community.

Approximately 40 volunteers have participated in activities this year. Our events included:

- Mar.** Naturalization Ceremony in Ogden
- Apr.** Awesome, Autistic Ogden & Ogden Nature Center Earth Day
- May** Davis Pride and the Ogden Farmers Market
- June** Utah Pride, Washington Terrace Days, Juneteenth, and the Ogden Farmers Market
- July** Ogden Farmers Market
- Aug.** National Night Out Against Crime, Ogden Farmers Market, Ogden Pride, and Back to School events at Ogden High and Ben Lomond.
- Sep.** Ogden Farmers Market, Harvest Moon Festival, Constitution Day Event, National Voter Registration Day Event, WSU Block Party, and the Ogden Hispanic Festival.
- Oct.** Dia de los Muertos (Ben Lomond) and Dia de los Muertos (Union Station)

We also have been attending non-LWV debate events, primarily to promote VOTE411. Fall and Winter activities will include opportunities at major employers and faith communities.

Utah Protects Former Felons' Voting Rights

By Kathy Fitzgerald, LWV Utah

Do you remember the case in Florida of the Black former inmates who were arrested at gunpoint for voting illegally? TV footage covering the arrests showed the victims' complete surprise, having thought they had fulfilled all of the requirements to restore their eligibility. The incident shined a spotlight on the issue of voting rights for ex-felons.

Because elections are controlled by the states, each state sets its own regulations. They vary from universal franchise regardless of incarceration status to certain former inmates' losing the right to vote for life.

One might expect a red state like Utah to be at the restrictive end of the scale, but, surprisingly, such is not the case. Utah stands with 20 other states, including California and New York, that deny the vote to the incarcerated, but return it to inmates who have served their time. Even if they are on parole or probation, they are eligible to vote.

The thinking is that once released, the former inmate has legally fulfilled his/her obligation to society, and should be restored full citizenship rights.

Protecting and enhancing voting rights for all citizens is a foundational belief of the League of Women Voters. We in Utah can be proud of our state's position on restoring the franchise to former inmates, as well as on our excellent vote-by-mail system.


But these rights require constant vigilance. Currently over 20 bills have been filed with the legislature connecting the word elections to words like modifications, audits, revisions and other similar language. Utah is not immune to the pressure to curtail voting rights.

Twelve Reasons Why Women Should Vote

By Carey Dabney, LWV Southeast Utah

A little over 100 years ago, the Women Suffrage Party, in an effort to get the 19th Amendment passed to ensure women had the right to vote guaranteed by the US Constitution, published the following:

Women Should Vote:

1. **Because** it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the law should have a voice in choosing who makes the law.
 2. **Because** most laws affect women as much as men, and some laws affect women more than men.
 3. **Because** the laws which affect women are now passed without consulting them.
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4. **Because** laws affecting children should be regarded from the woman's point of view as well as the man's.
 5. **Because** questions affecting the home come up for consideration in every session of the Legislature and of Congress.
 6. **Because** women have experience that should be brought to bear on legislation.
 7. **Because** to deprive women of the vote is to lower their position in common estimation.
 8. **Because** the possession of the vote would increase the sense of responsibility among women toward questions of public importance.
 9. **Because** public-spirited mothers mean public-spirited sons [and daughters].
 10. **Because** large numbers of intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working women desire the franchise.
 11. **Because** the objections raised against their having the franchise are based on sentiment, not on reason.
 12. **Because** to sum up all reasons in one — IT IS FOR THE COMMON GOOD.


On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th and last state needed to pass the 19th Amendment. The Tennessee State Senate voted to ratify, but there was a tie vote in the House of Representatives. A young man named Harry Burn, who had declared against the 19th Amendment, cast the tie-breaking vote. Acting on advice from his mother, he changed his vote from nay to yea and altered the course of history.

One vote made the difference between women remaining second-class citizens or guaranteeing women the right to vote under the Law. One vote.

Recent US census voting data indicates approximately 300,000 women in Utah are eligible but not registered to vote. That's a lot of women giving men the power to determine their future and the future of this country.

Register to vote if you don't like what is happening to you, your family, your community, your state, and your country. And then vote. Vote in every election from school board to president. Make it a habit; role model how to vote for your children. Vote as if your life depended upon it because it could.

One vote is all it takes to change the future. Your vote is your voice. If you don't use it, no one can hear you.



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