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**SENATE BILL 5780**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Darneille, Walsh, Rolfes, Rivers, Saldaña, Angel, Wellman, Brown, Chase, Wilson, Cleveland, Keiser, Warnick, Short, Kuderer, Becker, Ranker, Bailey, Conway, and Hunt

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

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

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

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

State women's right to vote legislation eventually passed the Washington territorial legislature twice, but each time was found unconstitutional by the territorial supreme court. With the 1910 approval of a state constitutional amendment by the male voters of the state, Washington became the first state in the twentieth century, and the fifth state overall, to enact women's right to vote at the state level.

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

The path to women's suffrage was blazed by western states. Washington followed Wyoming (1890), Colorado (1893), Utah (1895), and Idaho (1896), and was immediately succeeded by California (1911) and Oregon (1912), in establishing women's right to vote.

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

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

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

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The Washington women's history consortium shall:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The consortium has the following powers, and may exercise them as necessary to carry out its duties:

(1) To appoint task forces or advisory committees;

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

(3) To enter into agreements or contracts; and

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Legislative members serving on the consortium or any task forces or advisory committees created must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

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

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The consortium shall report annually by December 1st to the governor and the legislature on the work of the consortium, together with any recommendations to the governor and legislature.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This chapter expires July 1, 2021.

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

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