SENATE RESOLUTION

8670

By Senators Becker, Wellman, Saldaña, Salomon, Hunt, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Hasegawa, Conway, Hobbs, Wilson, C., Kuderer, Frockt, Liias, Fortunato, Hawkins, Short, King, McCoy, Darneille, Van De Wege, Randall, Mullet, Dhingra, Cleveland, Carlyle, Warnick, Das, Zeiger, Ericksen, Rolfes, Wagoner, Muzzall, Sheldon, Honeyford, Walsh, Keiser, Padden, Rivers, O'Ban, Stanford, Billig, and Brown

WHEREAS, March 22, 2020, marks the one hundredth anniversary of the Washington State Legislature ratifying the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, legalizing the right to vote for most women in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Washington women and men fought with great perseverance in the face of often stern resistance for women's right to vote nationally and in our state for more than sixty-five years, both during Territorial days and after statehood before the 19th Amendment authorizing women's suffrage was approved by our state Legislature; and

WHEREAS, In 1853, eighteen-year old Catharine Paine Blaine, the youngest signer of the Declaration of Sentiments at the 1848 Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, brought the message of women's rights to the new Washington Territory and later became one of only two women who signed this historic Declaration to actually vote in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, In 1854 early Washington Territorial legislator Arthur Denny proposed a women's suffrage bill that failed by only one vote; and

WHEREAS, In 1867 Washington Territorial legislator Edward Eldridge successfully prime sponsored an act that struck the word "male" from the voting laws, thus technically opening up voting to "all white American citizens above the age of twenty-one," most notably including women; however, this interpretation of the law was not widely embraced and women were routinely turned away at the polls; and

WHEREAS, In 1870 sisters Mary Olney Brown and Charlotte Olney French launched several attempts to cast votes in Thurston County and, eventually succeeding, became the first women to successfully cast ballots in Washington Territory and thus to encourage others; and

WHEREAS, In 1871 Pacific Northwest women's rights leader Abigail Scott Duniway organized a speaking tour with national suffrage movement leader Susan B. Anthony through Washington Territory to promote women's suffrage; and

WHEREAS, In 1871 Susan B. Anthony became the first woman to address the Washington Territorial Legislature and cofounded the Washington Women's Suffrage Association; and

WHEREAS, In 1871, Washington Territorial Legislature passed an anti-suffrage law declaring that women could not vote until Congress made it the law of the land; and

WHEREAS, On November 23, 1883, women living in Washington Territory gained the right to vote by action of the Territorial Legislature; and

WHEREAS In 1883, when the Territorial Legislature enacted women's suffrage, African American women in Washington Territory became some of the first to have voting rights in the country; and

WHEREAS, On November 26, 1886, the Washington Territorial Legislature amended the 1883 act to state clearly that "all American citizens male and female" could vote; and

WHEREAS, In 1887 the voting rights that were extended to women in Washington Territory in 1883 were revoked by the Washington Territory Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, In 1888, the Territorial Legislature again enacted voting rights for women, but again it was overturned by the Territorial Supreme Court that same year; and

WHEREAS, Washington women leaders such as Emma Smith DeVoe and May Arkwright Hutton and many others resurrected the local women's suffrage movement in the early 20th century and led Washington women to voting victory using the strategy of a calm and direct approach using campaigning posters, penny postcards and cookbooks in their campaigns; and

WHEREAS, On November 8, 1910, men voted in favor of women's suffrage 52,299 to 29,676, a nearly two-to-one margin, making Washington the first state in the 20th century and the fifth state in the Union to enfranchise women; and

WHEREAS, This new Washington state constitutional provision, however, did not in itself authorize all women to vote, because two other factors blocked this right; (1) It authorized voting only for those who could read and speak English; and (2) many women, including immigrant Asians and Native Americans, were subject to other restrictive citizenship laws which denied the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, After women's suffrage was achieved in Washington in 1910, Washington women worked tirelessly to extend the woman's right to vote nationwide through astute political organizing, private persuasion, and mass action; and

WHEREAS, Carrie Chapman Catt, who lived in Seattle and founded the Woman's Century Club there, was a leader in the national movement and met with President Woodrow Wilson to secure his support for suffrage in light of women's contributions during World War I; and

WHEREAS, Washington's Emma Smith DeVoe founded the first national organization of voting women, the National Council of Women Voters, headquartered in Tacoma, which was the forerunner of the League of Women Voters; and

WHEREAS, In June 1919 Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution and sent it to the state Legislatures for ratification, requiring thirty-six states to ratify it; and

WHEREAS, On March 22, 1920, the Washington State Legislature unanimously ratified the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, On August 26, 1920, the last of the necessary thirty-six states ratified the 19th Amendment, thus enfranchising nearly half of the United States adult population; and

WHEREAS, The passionate, extended fight for women's suffrage, from the first women's rights convention in 1848 to national enfranchisement in 1920, lasted 72 years, with women from all walks of life, political views, and demographic backgrounds asking for the right to voice their opinions at the polls; and

WHEREAS, Washington women by the thousands advocated for the right to vote—in parades, picketing, in newspapers, and in the state and federal capitols; and

WHEREAS, Daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters of the women who fought so hard to vote have been making their voices heard at the polls for over one hundred years in Washington state and nearly one hundred years nationwide; and

WHEREAS, Most of the women who worked for the right to vote did not live to see the success of enfranchisement of women; and

WHEREAS, In contemporary times, women are running for office in unprecedented numbers, with many current politicians, both male and female, keeping in mind that they follow in the footsteps of these great suffragists; and

WHEREAS, Many of the women and men who worked for Woman Suffrage in Washington Territory and then Washington state from 1854 to 1920 deserve recognition for their efforts and triumph;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate celebrate February 13, 2020, as the 100th Anniversary of the Washington State Legislature ratifying the 19th Amendment, and encourage accompanying celebrations throughout the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate reaffirm its commitment to empowering and uplifting the voices of women across our great state.

I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8670,

adopted by the Senate

February 13, 2020

BRAD HENDRICKSON

Secretary of the Senate