

## A Walk Through the History of the League of Women Voters



- ☆ 1840 After being denied seats at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London because they were women, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton made a pact to start a women's rights movement in the U.S.
- ☆ 1848 First women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, NY.
- ☆ 1869 Women Suffrage Association founded in Brooklyn.
- ☆ 1918 New York State Women's Suffrage Party was instrumental in having New York State adopt women's suffrage in 1917, to be effective for elections in 1918.
- ☆ 1919 The League of Women Voters of the City of New York is formed.
- ☆ 1920 The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote is passed.
- ☆ 1920s The League develops and advocates a comprehensive social welfare agenda, achieving its first legislative successes with passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act providing federal aid for maternal and child care programs.
- ☆ Membership is open to men, and Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the president of the City Council and future Mayor, won first prize by enrolling 80 men.
- ☆ Successfully advocated for Social Security and the enactment of the Food and Drug Acts, as well as the TVA. Launched a national campaign in support of a merit system to select government employees.
- ☆ 1940s Supported the war effort and the formation of the United Nations.
- ☆ 1950s Campaigned for civil rights, emphasizing protection of individual rights and testified against abuse of congressional investigative powers during the McCarthy period.
- ☆ 1960s Supported equal access to education, racial integration of schools, fair employment and fair housing.
- ☆ 1960s Adopted position in favor of direct popular election of the President; Supported the 26th Amendment reducing the voting age to 18; Worked for passage of the Clean Air and the Clean Water Acts.
- ☆ 1980s Joined the fight to pass the Voting Rights Amendments of 1982; advocated for reproductive rights.
- ☆ 1990s Supported passage of the National Voter Registration Act which simplified voting procedures; Worked for campaign finance reform and effective gun control.
- ☆ 2011 The League is in the forefront of efforts to reform legislative redistricting by supporting an end to partisan gerrymandering and the adoption of legislation creating independent commissions to draw impartial legislative and congressional lines.
- ☆ 2014 The League of Women Voters of Florida was the lead organizational plaintiff in the lawsuit, and was the driving force behind passage of the Fair Districts Amendments. Florida Circuit Court issued an opinion in *Romo v. Detzner*, a case that examined whether Florida's congressional districts violate that state's constitution. The Florida decision is major victory against partisan gerrymandering.

Today The League of Women Voters is active in 50 states as well as Guam and the Virgin Islands. It is a grassroots, non-partisan, multi-purpose organization that encourages its members to educate the public about, and lobby for, government and social reform legislation. Over the years, the League has tackled the major issues facing our nation, state and city. Visit [www.lwvnyc.org](http://www.lwvnyc.org) to learn more.