

# A GREAT DAY FOR DEMOCRACY

## WOMEN WIN RIGHT TO VOTE AFTER LONG STRUGGLE

By our politics editor

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**M**ASSACHUSETTS yesterday became the eighth U.S. state to approve the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women the right to vote. The amendment makes it illegal to stop people from voting in national or state elections because of their gender.

The historic event follows years of campaigning by suffragists including Susan B. Anthony—born in the town of Adams—who brought her exceptional skills and energy to the suffragist movement and became president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

In 1878, she proposed a revision to an amendment of the U.S.

Constitution, giving women the right to vote.

Sadly, Anthony (right), who died in 1906, has not lived to see this day. But the 19th Amendment has come to be known as the “Susan B. Anthony Amendment” in her honor. Other prominent Massachusetts campaigners such as Lucy Stone also passed away before their dream was realized.

Yesterday was nevertheless a great day for democracy—and a great day for women. It follows their important role on the home front during the World War. With so many men away at war, many women worked outside of the home for the first time, filling positions in factories that supported the war effort.

Such patriotic wartime service helped win public support for the suffragist cause. Anna Howard Shaw was the perfect example of

changing times as a female doctor and campaigner who chaired the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense.

The amendment’s passage has not been easy, and President Woodrow Wilson felt compelled to intervene with a U.S. Senate speech. “Give justice to women,” he said. The amendment is still to be ratified by other states.

For generations, many men—and even some women—have believed that if women were allowed to take part in politics, they risked neglecting their homes and children.

Suffragists pointed out that women are citizens and should be allowed a voice in government affairs. Despite this, some white campaigners were reluctant to recruit any African-American suffragists due to fears they might deter supporters.



**INDIGENOUS** women traditionally held various leadership positions in their Native cultures. Successive colonial governments undermined Native women, often rendering them invisible and worthless in other people’s minds, as ways of eradicating traditional cultures and obtaining land.