Celebrating the 19th Amendment for Women’s Right to Vote

**THE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN AMERICA**

Since our founding, Girl Scouts has encouraged members to be civically involved. Today's youth are more vocal than ever about the change they want to see, and Girl Scouts are the most equipped with the skills needed to make a real impact.

One such way is by voting. Most girls in Girl Scouting are not able to vote, but they can become informed about the issues in our country at any age. They can learn to speak up for their beliefs. They can learn to put their beliefs into action by voting when they are old enough, and to encourage others who are of voting age to vote.

Voting is about using your voice to stand up for what you believe in. Most parents, regardless of political leanings, want their children to grow up knowing that their thoughts and opinions matter. Besides that, the candidates who are voted into office will be shaping your girl’s future - from her educational options today to her financial realities as she becomes an adult.”

In 1920, women were given the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. As this 100th anniversary approaches, it's a good time to look back and learn about the suffrage movement,

**History of the right to vote**

When the U.S. Constitution was drafted in Philadelphia in 1787, women were not included in the debates and discussions of how to govern the country. Participation in this new democracy did not extend past the white men who qualified by meeting various religious, property, and taxpaying criteria.

Black men were granted the right to vote in 1870 with the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, but women were denied this right until the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

The first women’s rights convention was in 1848 at a meeting held in Seneca Falls, New York. Women and men came together at this convention and used the words of the Declaration of Independence to demand that women be afforded the right to vote. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Frederick Douglass were some of the prominent names responsible for these initial actions.

**What can we do today?**

Encourage girls to learn who their women representatives are on the local, state and national level.

Take girls to a polling station, have them interview the poll workers, and find a way to thank them for their role in our democratic process.

Have girls design signs on the Anniversary of the 19th amendment that gave women the right to vote.

Research some of the key people that fought for the 19th amendment and read it to their class or troop.

Have the girls earn their Citizen’s badges for their age:

Good Neighbor, Daisy

Celebrating Community, Brownie

Inside Government, Junior

Finding Common Ground, Cadette

Behind the ballot, Senior

Public Policy, Ambassador

Let us know what they have done so we can all share in their accomplishments. Share on Facebook, Instagram, with your local media and with the council public relations department.

**ACTIVITY TO DEMONSTRATE HISTORY OF VOTING RIGHTS**

OBJECTIVE: To help girls learn the history of voting rights in the USA

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Small color papers (cut enough for each girl to have one): Make 30% gray, 10% green, 30% pink, 10% orange and 20% dark green

WHAT TO DO:

• Give each girl one color paper (they take from a brown bag without looking).

• State that according to the laws in the early years of our country, only the white men could vote. So only the girls with the gray paper could vote. Ask these girls to decide a game or song for all to do. Discuss if this is fair.

• Explain that after many years of hard struggle, culmination in the Civil War (1865-1877), free Black males won the right to vote. However, local poll taxes, “literacy” tests, and other discriminatory acts often prevented them from voting. Ask the girls with the gray and green ballot to decide a game or a song for all to do. Discuss if this is fair.

• Explain that in 1920 after many years of struggle, some women won the right to vote. So add the girls with pink papers to the girls who can vote. Again, ask these girls to decide on a game or a song for all to do. Discuss if this is fair.

• In 1924, Native Americans won the right to vote after finally being declared citizens of the USA. The girls with the orange paper can now be added to the girls who can vote. Again, ask this group to decide on a short activity for the group.

• Starting in the 1950s, there were some major changes in the voting laws, making poll taxes and other discriminatory acts illegal. There were larger-scale efforts to help register all eligible voters. The girls with the dark green paper can now be added to the girls who can vote. Now all of the girls can vote on a game or song or activity.