

Voices

On August 26, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was officially added to the Constitution of the United States. It reads:

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex.”

In 1920, American women gained one of the most basic rights of citizens in a democracy. The Nokomis Foundation reminds you to exercise that right — remember to vote in November.

Creating a stronger voice
for women and girls.

161 Ottawa NW
Suite 305-C
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The
Nokomis
Foundation



October 2000  Issue Seventeen

Nonprofit
organization
US postage
PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit no. 368

Inside Story

If you're anything like me, you are probably growing tired of election polls, campaign advertisements, and political rhetoric. Imagine what it would be like, though, to endure this campaign process as a spectator, not as a participant — as someone with no say in the outcome of the election. We need to remember that it has been only eighty years since women were granted the right to vote. We have an obligation to our foremothers to participate in the election process — we need to learn about the issues, make our decisions, and then, most importantly, we need to get out and vote.

We dedicate this issue of Voices to the election process. We've assembled information and resources to help you learn about the issues — so you can make an informed decision when you head to the ballot booth next month. The gender gap in American politics is real — voting is a chance to make your voice heard and to make a difference.

Kym Mulhern, Executive Director

There will never be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers.

—Susan B. Anthony



Contact Us

The Nokomis Foundation
161 Ottawa NW, Suite 305-C
Grand Rapids, Michigan 40503
Phone 616.451.0267
Fax 616.451-9914
www.nokomisfoundation.org

Kym Mulhern
Executive Director
kmulhern@nokomisfoundation.org

Erin Trahan
Program Director
etrahan@nokomisfoundation.org

Yvonne Rothwell
Administrative Assistant
yrothwell@nokomisfoundation.org

Join one of our email listservs —

- **Voices**—targeted to grantees and women's organizations (to subscribe, send an email to kmulhern@nokomisfoundation.org)
- **Taking Flight**—targeted to adults interested in girls' issues (to subscribe, send an email to etrahan@nokomisfoundation.org)

Online Resources on Women, Voting and the Elections, *continued*

The WISH List
www.thewishlist.org

The WISH (Women In the Senate and House) List is a national organization that raises funds to help pro-choice, Republican women run for governor, the House, Senate, and state-level positions. The WISH website includes information on:

- Candidates WISH has endorsed for the upcoming election and helped to elect
- Upcoming events, press releases and newsletters

Emily's List
www.emilyslist.org

Emily's List is a national organization dedicated to helping pro-choice, Democratic candidates run for governor, the House, and the Senate. The website provides:

- Information on pro-choice Democratic candidates
- Highlights of Women VOTE, a project designed to educate and mobilize women voters nationally
- An online News Room with up-to-date information on women candidates

Institute for Women's Policy Research
www.iwpr.org

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating debate on issues of critical importance to women and their families. Research includes the *Status of Women in the States*, a project that discusses and ranks the well-being of women in each of the states on a number of indicators, including women's civic and political participation. The website includes:

- The rankings of each state based on women's overall political participation, women in elected office, women's voter registration, and institutional resources
- The percentage of women registered to vote and who voted
- Information that women voters care about, such as social security, equal pay, child care, and welfare reform

Information provided by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.



Point to Ponder

“It won't be easy for politicians of either party to fashion a 'women's message' because the women's vote is far from monolithic, and some of the issues of concern to large numbers of women are so tough and so complex they will require very creative solutions.”

Bob Herbert, New York Times

In response to the release of the Women's Voices 2000 poll

Did You Know. . .

Participating in the political process is one way women can seek representation of their interests and influence policies affecting their lives. Voter registration and turnout, female state and federal elected representation, and women's state institutional resources are all crucial to making women's political concerns visible.

- Women have reported consistently higher registration and voter turnout rates than men since 1980. By 1996, nearly 68 million women (or 67.3 percent of those eligible) reported being registered to vote, compared with nearly 60 million men (or 64.4 percent of those eligible).
- Although women constitute a minority of elected officials at both the national and state levels, their presence has grown steadily over the years. A record number of women hold office in the 106th Congress (1999-2000) with nine women in the U.S. Senate and 56 of 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

These statistics are provided by the Institute for Women's Policy Research as part of their ongoing research project, *The Status of Women in the States*. To learn more, check out IWPR's website at www.iwpr.org.

Women's Voices 2000

The Center for Policy Alternatives and Lifetime Television have just released the results of the [Women's Voices 2000](#) national poll. [Women's Voices](#) was first conducted in 1992 and is the only comprehensive initiative of women's views that has been done in subsequent presidential elections, this being the third.

Based on the [Women's Voices 2000](#) poll, here are 10 key points to understand about women in the 2000 elections:

1. Four years ago, women thought the economy was marked by instability; now, all groups of women see opportunity.
2. Women are asking, "Is this as good as it gets?" and class distinctions by educational and marital status are more evident.
3. Equal pay and benefits and juggling family and work are critical concerns for all groups.
4. Working women are focusing on benefits, not just wages.
5. Retirement is a big worry with the preferred solution being portable pensions than can be taken from one job to another.
6. Health care costs, another top concern, is also being met with a desire for self-management.
7. Women and men believe government can play a helping role and look to government more in 2000 than four years ago.
8. Close to half of women (48%) and men (45%) think it is likely that they will be responsible for caring for an elderly parent or other elderly person.
9. Entrepreneurship continues to be an attractive option as women seek more control and flexibility.
10. The time crunch is consistent over time for women as they juggle the demands of family and work and try to spend time with their children to instill moral values.

For more information about [Women's Voices 2000](#), check out the Center for Policy Alternatives website at [www.stateaction.org](#).

AFL-CIO Working Women Working Together [www.aflcio.org/women](#)

The AFL-CIO Working women's Department is dedicated to having women's priorities represented in the government and in the workforce. The AFL-CIO's *Ask A Working Women* survey found that equal pay, health care, retirement security, balancing work and family through paid family leave, child care, and control over work hours are issues of great importance to working women. The website has information on these issues and:

- Becoming active in the Working Women Working Together network
- Facts about working women
- The Equal Pay for Working Families Study (researched by the Institute for Women's Policy Research)

The League of Women Voters [www.lwv.org](#)

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The website includes information on:

- The League's Legislative priorities and projects, such as campaign finance reform
- The Democracy Network, which provides information on local, state, and national candidates
- The League's E-Library and News

The White House Project [www.thewhitehouseproject.org](#)

The White House Project is a non-profit, non-partisan public awareness campaign that aims to create a political climate amicable to women candidates for top executive positions, including the U.s. presidency. The website includes information on:

- WHP-sponsored forums and upcoming political events
- Links to online forums and a chat room
- WHP ballots for different elected executive positions

More web resources on following pages.

Web Resources

Online Resources on Women, Voting and the Elections

[Center for American Women and Politics
www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/)

The Center for American Women and Politics' (CAWP) mission is to promote greater understanding and knowledge about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP's website includes:

- Up-to-date statistics about female candidates for and elected officials in the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, governorships, and statewide elected offices
- Historical information on women in elected office for each state
- A fact sheet on women of color in elected office
- Reports that analyze the impact of women in public office and trace women's routes to public office

[National Women's Political Caucus
www.nwpc.org](http://www.nwpc.org)

The National Women's Political Caucus, Inc. (NWPC) is an organization dedicated to increasing women's participation in the political process and to identifying, recruiting, training and supporting pro-choice women for election and appointment to public office regardless of party affiliation. The NWPC provides women with campaign support and networking opportunities and promotes women for appointed office. NWPC campaign trainings sessions, a leadership program for girls, and a training for women corporate executives. The NWPC website includes:

- A calendar of upcoming events and a news and opinion section with news releases, articles, position papers, and speeches
- A list of endorsements for candidates for governor, mayor, the House, and the Senate; membership information

Ask a Working Woman

According to the national AFL-CIO [Ask A Working Woman](#) survey, working women around the country say they need more time, pay and benefits to meet their obligations at home and at work. Here are the top legislative priorities of working women:

Equal Pay

Nearly nine out of 10 women (87%) say stronger equal pay laws are important. This is true of women of all races, incomes, and education levels. Seventy-seven percent of women say higher pay and promotions are high priority; 66% say stronger programs to end discrimination and sexual harassment are important.

Balancing Work and Family

Paid Leave—83% of women say paid family leave is a priority. This goes for every woman, whether or not she has children. **Child Care**—70% say it is important to pass laws to improve the quality and affordability of child care. **Control Over Work Hours**—58% say control over work hours is a priority for change.

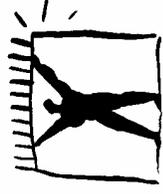
Health Care

Almost a quarter (24%) of working women don't get health care benefits from their jobs. Fully 84% of working women say legislation to improve access to quality health care is important, and 75% list better health benefits as a personal priority.

Retirement Security

Because working women generally earn less than men and are less likely to have good pension benefits, retirement security is very important to them. More than one in four working women (48%) don't receive pension or retirement benefits from the jobs. Legislation to improve pensions and protect Social Security is a high priority for 81% of working women.

Social Security Is Women's Security



Social Security is very important to women and often is their only source of retirement income in their later years. Women are heavily reliant on Social Security benefits because of wage and employment discrimination and different patterns of labor force participation. Despite changes in women's workforce participation, these patterns have persisted.

Most women do not receive employer-provided pensions:

Only 30 percent of women receive employer-provided pension benefits compared to 48 percent of men. This is especially problematic for women of color, who are less likely to have employer-provided pension plans than either white men, white women, or nonwhite men.

Women are more likely to spend time out of the paid labor force:

Twenty-one percent of women between the ages of 25-44 were not employed in 1996 compared to only 7 percent of men. Many of these women are mothers of young children.

Women earn 74 cents for every dollar men earn:

Women who work full-time earn less than men who are employed full-time. The average woman college graduate earns little more than the average male high school graduate.

Women are less likely to work full-time:

Seventy-four percent of men between the ages of 25-44 were employed full-time for all of 1996, compared to 49 percent of women in that age group.

Women are more dependent on Social Security in their retirement years:

Women represent 60 percent of all Social Security recipients at age 65, and by age 85, 71 percent of recipients are women. Social Security provides 90 percent of income for 41 percent of all older women; 25 percent have no other source of income.

Women for Social Security



- Social Security is 100% secure until the 2030s. After that, even with no changes, it will continue to pay about three-quarters of promised benefits.
- Social Security benefits rise with inflation.
- You can't outlive Social Security like you can an individual retirement account—a valuable feature with people living longer these days.
- Social Security has never missed a benefit payment.
- If necessary, Social Security provides valuable disability and survivor benefits for you and your family.

It is important for women to find out where candidates for President and Congress really stand on the issue of Social Security. Many proposals to “save Social Security” call for privatizing Social Security—a potentially risky plan that could cut the lifetime, guaranteed, inflation-adjusted benefits provided by the current Social Security system.

To learn more, contact the [National Council of Women's Organization's Women and Social Security Project](#) at 1-800-627-0649 or check out the website at www.women4socialsecurity.org. Get informed—then get out and vote.