

## I Am Woman

In today's political climate, women's issues are of primary concern and well they should be.

When we look back over the last century, we tend to congratulate ourselves on our progress; but the truth is our progress has been slow and thwarted with perilous opposition supporters.

Today, especially in this era of President Donald Trump and a new Supreme Court that could very well issue momentous decisions infringing upon women's rights, it is especially important for all of us to roar and oppose with as much strength as we can muster, his hateful policies and those of his Republican supporters.

Horry County Democrats are committed to doing just that.

### A Look Back

The first women's march occurred in 1908 and brought attention to the issues that most, if not all, women hold dear. Marches in the name of women have continued through the decades with the largest on record in January 2018 immediately following the inauguration of Donald Trump.

The United States has made significant strides since 1908, including obtaining the right to vote with passage by Congress in June 1919 of the 19th amendment, which guarantees all American women this precious right.

But, achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution. Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920.



Our Suffragette Sisters did not achieve this milestone event in history easily; it took decades for them to accomplish their purpose.

Between 1878, when the amendment was first introduced in Congress, and August 18, 1920, when it was ratified, champions of voting rights for women worked tirelessly, but strategies for achieving their goal varied. Some pursued a strategy of passing suffrage acts in each state — nine western states adopted woman suffrage legislation by 1912. Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts. Militant suffragists used tactics such as parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes.

Often supporters met fierce resistance. Opponents heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused them yet they never gave up, they found strength with the support of each other in their cause; a cause we benefit from today without really giving thought as to how it happened.



## Our Challenge, Our Opportunity

This recitation of history is to remind us of the struggles that took place, the value and importance of your vote, and what this country would be like without it.

Our vote is our voice and there is a partisan mission afoot by many conservatives to quiet our voice. We cannot allow that to happen. We must overcome our shocking history of complacency in voting. The fact is that every vote not cast is

roughly equivalent to two votes for the opposition, and the cynical Right is counting on Democrats to say “aw shucks, I’d rather go to the movies than to stand on line to vote.”

Women were instrumental in determining the outcome of the 2012 election – and we will most likely do it again in the 2018 midterms and the 2020 general election. We must accept that challenge and make good on it because there is much at stake for women. Thankfully, women have a say in who represents us. We are 51 percent of the population.

Let’s vote like it.

Today’s women make up 50 percent of the US workforce and now earn a higher percentage of college degrees than our male counterparts; yet, the US ranks 28th out of 145 countries in the annual world ranking of equality for women. The ranking, done by the World Economic Forum, bases its equality ranking on economic, educational, health, and political indices.

Did you know that in 2016, women working full time in the United States typically were paid just 80 percent of what men were paid, a gap of 20 percent?

However, the inequality of wages is not straight forward men vs. women; there is also a racial component. The 20 percent gap mentioned above refers to white women; the gap is higher for black and Hispanic women as well as Asian. Currently, women earn approximately 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man doing the same work, but black women earn only 64 cents and Latinas only 54 cents compared to a white man doing the same job.

Although the gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due largely to women's progress in education and workforce participation and to men's wages rising at a slower rate. Still, the pay gap does not appear likely to go away on its own. At the rate of change between 1960 and 2018, women are expected to reach pay equity with men in 2069. But even that slow progress has stalled in recent years. ***If the change continues at the slower rate seen since 2001, women will not reach pay equity with men until... 2119! Yes, you read that correctly, not for another century.***

Women have been fighting for more than 100 years for equality and although progress has been made, we are not there yet. Numerous issues need to be addressed and rectified. Please see the box at right.

The Trump Administration has been on the attack since before he was sworn in and continues to aggressively attempt to diminish women's rights. The president and his cronies would be happiest if they could turn back the clock to pre-1920 when we didn't have the right to vote, or to determine what we could do with our bodies.

Trump is aggressively tipping the judicial scales to achieve his goal to keep us "barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen." We cannot, will not, allow this to happen. We have strength and we must do all we can to defeat his agenda.

Remember the lyrics to the great Helen Reddy song:

**"I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME ROAR"**

let's change that to:

**WE ARE WOMEN AND YOU WILL HEAR US ROAR.**

As the months go forward and we march toward a Democratic victory in 2020 (not to mention a resounding one in 2018), I plan on writing a paper on each of these issues and perhaps more. I welcome your input and would appreciate any feedback to may offer. You can reach me at [kohnway@hotmail.com](mailto:kohnway@hotmail.com). You can find those articles at <https://horrydemocrats.org/news-info/>.

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*include,*

*but are not limited to:*

*Guaranteed Equal Rights*

*Violence Against Women/Exploitation*

*Reproductive Rights*

*Economic Justice*

*Racial Justice*

*LGBTQ Rights*

*Constitutional Equality*

*Affordable Health Care for All*

Contributed by Sandy Kohn