



RESOURCE GUIDE

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY



OVERVIEW

Women's Equality Day in the United States is celebrated annually on August 26th commemorating the day the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. It gave women the right to vote as it became unconstitutional to deny an individual the right to vote based on sex. America has officially celebrated Women's Equality Day since 1971, when Representative Bella Abzug championed a bill in the U.S. Congress, alongside Congresswomen Shirley Chisholm and Patsy Mink. There was a second wave of feminists, the women's liberation movement, pushing for change a year prior in 1970. The newly formed National Organization for Women, also known as NOW, organized a strike to commemorate August 26th on the fiftieth anniversary of Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certifying the proclamation. The strike

in 1920 and President Richard Nixon federally recognizing Women's Equality Day in 1971 celebrated women gaining the right to vote in the U.S. about 50 year earlier; however, many feminist movements shifted their attention to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) around the time Women's Equality Day was proclaimed.

Currently, the fight continues for equal opportunities outlined in the ERA like employment, wages and education. Notably in sports, iconic stories of superstars like Billie Jean King highlight the progress that's happened. King spearheaded a movement for equal prize money in professional tennis. Her journey includes defeating Boddy Riggs, a male chauvinist set out to prove women's tennis players inferiority, in the 1973 "Battle of the Sexes." Led by King, women tennis players successfully fought for equal prize money starting with the U.S. Open in the same year. Similarly, Megan Rapinoe and the U.S. Women's National Team successfully advocated for equal pay for Men and Women teams within the U.S. National Soccer organization.

It's also more than wages. In 1967, Kathrine Switzer registered for the Boston Marathon under a gender ambiguous name, K.V. Switzer, sparking events that led to ending the official gender barrier in 1972. In 1973, the same year King's tennis movement gained national attention, Peachy Kellmeyer and Elaine Gavigan leveraged the recently passed Title IX legislation to secure scholarship opportunities for women athletes and expand women's participation in sports on college campuses across the country.

More recently, Olympic runners like Allyson Felix spoke out about poor industry maternity policies by sponsoring companies and the U.S. Olympic Committee. They have also highlighted other double standards that exist for male and female athletes. This has led to some changes like Nike and other endorsement companies adopting new maternity policies. There are sports organizations like the Women's National Basketball Association representing opportunities for growth. Women's Equality Day began as an acknowledgement of all sexes having the right to vote, but now, it signifies the need for all sexes to have equal rights.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Engage with friends, family, and colleagues in discussions about Women's History in America, popular suffragist, and contributions women have made in America:
 - Do you know what year women gained the right to vote?
 - What suffrage leader was arrested, tried and fined for voting in 1872?
 - What has the impact of Title IX been on women's sports?
 - Engage in critical dialogue around the United States' complicated history regarding sex and gender discrimination. For example:
 - As an organization, are we ensuring every individual is equally compensated for their role regardless of sex?
 - Examine your organization at every level for diversity of sex and gender, including executive, managerial and entry level.
 - How can we take steps beyond equality to make our organization equitable for woman?
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ACTION STEPS

- Discuss the things you read, listen to, or watch regarding discrimination on the basis of Sex in America and do not be afraid to ask difficult questions.
- Educate yourself and your loved ones on the history and traditions of Women's Equality Day.
- Be critical of yourself, your own communities, organizations, departments, and teams. Ask if there are policies and practices in place marginalizing women in the workplace.

RESOURCES



WEBSITES

- [National Women's History Alliance](#)
- [National Women's History Museum](#)
- [Equal Rights Advocates](#)



VIDEOS/FILMS

- [On the Basis of Sex](#)
- [Hidden Figures](#)
- [Battle of the Sexes](#)
- [The Past and Future of the Women's Rights Movement | Women's History Month | PEOPLE](#)



READINGS

- [From Suffrage Day to Women's Equality Day: A Brief History of Celebrating August 26](#)
- [The Myth of Seneca Falls](#) by Lisa Tetrault
- [The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote](#) by Elaine Weiss