

Pennsylvania

1833—Prominent Quaker, Lucretia Mott founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFASS) to advocate for abolition and suffrage.

1854—Mott, Harriet Forten Purvis, and PFASS organized the fifth National Women's Rights Convention in Philadelphia, where suffragists like Susan B. Anthony promoted the use of petitions, women's rights newspapers, debate, and a commitment to addressing suffrage on a local level.

1866—Purvis helped organize the Philadelphia Suffrage Association, and Mott and other abolitionists founded the Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association in 1869.

1871—When election officials rejected the state's first female attorney, Carrie Burnham's attempt to vote, Burnham took her case to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. She argued that, as a citizen, the 14th Amendment guaranteed her right to vote. The court denied Burnham's claim, and state legislature voted to amend the state constitution to specify that only male citizens were able to vote.

1909—Suffragists founded the Equal Franchise Society of Philadelphia (EFSP) and significantly increased the number of events, parades, and car tours to support suffrage.

1913—The Pennsylvania Legislature passed a state suffrage constitutional amendment which the electorate needed to approve via referendum in 1915. Although the referendum failed by 75,000 votes, the women whom PFASS and EFSP mobilized proved essential to national efforts to secure passage of the 19th Amendment.

1915—As the national suffrage movement pressed for passage of the federal amendment, Pennsylvania led one of the most successful suffrage publicity campaigns—the Justice Bell. The Justice Bell, a replica of Philadelphia's Liberty Bell, with its clapper disabled, symbolized the silencing of disenfranchised women. The Justice Bell traveled 4,000 miles across Pennsylvania in the back of a truck. Using the truck bed as an impromptu stage, suffragists barnstormed with rural voters as they traversed the state.

Pennsylvania did not enact its own suffrage legislation but ratified the 19th Amendment on June 24, 1919.

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