



State of Wisconsin  
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

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## 2023 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 137

February 23, 2024 - Introduced by Representatives DITTRICH, SUBECK, DONOVAN, C. ANDERSON, BARE, ROZAR, DRAKE, EMERSON, JOERS, BINSFELD, STUBBS, SINICKI, MURSAU, RATCLIFF, NEUBAUER, MOORE OMOKUNDE, O'CONNOR, CLANCY, SHANKLAND, PALMERI, CONLEY, TRANEL, SCHUTT and ARMSTRONG, cosponsored by Senators BALLWEG, ROYS, LARSON, SPREITZER, AGARD, CARPENTER and PFAFF. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1     **Relating to:** proclaiming March 2024 as Women's History Month.

2             Whereas, American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have  
3     made historic contributions to our nation in countless recorded and unrecorded  
4     ways; and

5             Whereas, the Wisconsin Legislature granted property rights to married women  
6     in 1850; and

7             Whereas, in 1869, the first women graduated from the University of Wisconsin.  
8     This same year, the Wisconsin Legislature passed a law allowing women to run for  
9     school boards and other elective school offices, though they could not vote in school  
10    board elections until 1884; and

11            Whereas, in the campaign for Women's Suffrage, Wisconsin produced notable  
12    suffragists such as Olympia Brown of Racine, Clara Bewick Colby of Madison, Carrie  
13    Chapman Catt of Ripon, Jessie Jack Hooper of Oshkosh, Ada James of Richland  
14    Center, and Belle Case La Follette of Baraboo; and

1           Whereas, Wisconsin is part of the original 36 states to ratify the 19th  
2 Amendment to the United States Constitution, which provides, “The right of citizens  
3 of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or  
4 by any State on account of sex,” and holds the distinction of being the first state to  
5 ratify, on June 10, 1919, and formally certify its ratification papers in Washington,  
6 D.C.; and

7           Whereas, in July 1921, after decades of campaigning by women for voting and  
8 other rights, Wisconsin passed the nation’s first women’s equal rights law, declaring  
9 “Women shall have the same rights and privileges under the law as men,” including  
10 “holding office”—affirming women’s right to hold any public office; and

11           Whereas, a 1923 survey of Wisconsin cities and villages by the University of  
12 Wisconsin’s Municipal Information Bureau identified more than 400 women in  
13 public office, of whom approximately half sat on school and library boards and who  
14 also included Wisconsin’s first female mayor, county supervisor, sheriff, nine  
15 alderwomen, 12 village trustees, and dozens of clerks and treasurers; and

16           Whereas, in 1925, three women, Representatives Mildred Barber of Wausau,  
17 Hellen Brooks of Caloma, and Helen Thompson of Park Falls, were the first female  
18 assembly representatives to be elected to the Wisconsin Legislature; and

19           Whereas, Wisconsin amended its own constitution in 1934 to include women’s  
20 suffrage; and

21           Whereas, in 1983, the Wisconsin Women’s Council became a permanent state  
22 agency governed by a bipartisan board appointed by the governor and legislative  
23 leaders; and

24           Whereas, in 2023, a total of 41 women took their seats in the state assembly and  
25 senate, the most ever in Wisconsin history; and

1           Whereas, the role of American women continues to evolve, and their positive  
2 contributions to our culture, society, and government continue to grow and inspire  
3 future generations; and

4           Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, whether in their homes,  
5 in their workplaces, in schools, in the community, in the courts, or during wartime,  
6 women have fought for themselves, their families, and all people of the United  
7 States; and

8           Whereas, since the American Revolution, women have been vital to the mission  
9 of the Armed Forces, with nearly 2,000 Wisconsin women serving on active duty and  
10 over 30,000 women veterans from Wisconsin representing every branch of service;  
11 and

12           Whereas, American women have played and continue to play a critical  
13 economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of life and constitute a significant  
14 portion of the labor force working inside and outside the home, with women now  
15 representing approximately half of the workforce of the United States and owning  
16 more than 10 million businesses; and

17           Whereas, according to U.S. Census Bureau data, women are at the helm of  
18 about 18 percent of all employer firms located in Wisconsin; and

19           Whereas, the women of Wisconsin have been and continue to be leaders in the  
20 forefront of international affairs, social change efforts, education, journalism,  
21 literature, art, film, technology, math, science, athletics, and other fields including,  
22 but not limited to, Golda Meir, who grew up in Milwaukee, was the Prime Minister  
23 of Israel from 1969-1974; Nobel Peace Prize winner and Liberian president, Ellen  
24 Johnson Sirleaf, who attended school in Madison, was the first female head of state  
25 of any African country; Vel Phillips, a woman of many firsts, was the first Black

