



State of Wisconsin
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

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2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 17

March 14, 2023 - Introduced by Senators BALLWEG, L. JOHNSON, CABRAL-GUEVARA, AGARD, FELZKOWSKI, HESSELBEIN, ROYS and TAYLOR, cosponsored by Representatives DITTRICH, SUBECK, SAPIK, ANDRACA, DUCHOW, BILLINGS, ROZAR, CABRERA, RODRIGUEZ, CONLEY, NEDWESKI, DRAKE, HURD, EMERSON, VANDERMEER, HONG, SCHUTT, JACOBSON, MYERS, NEUBAUER, ORTIZ-VELEZ, PALMERI, RATCLIFF, SHANKLAND, SHELTON, SINICKI, STUBBS and VINING. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming March 2023 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 10,000,000 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

