SIXTH REPORT TO CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT

SUSAN COMBS, CHAIRWOMAN
COLLEEN SHOGAN, VICE CHAIRWOMAN

FEBRUARY 5, 2020
INTRODUCTION

The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) was created by Congress in 2017 to “ensure a suitable observance of the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing for women’s suffrage.”

Led by Chairwoman Susan Combs, Vice Chairwoman Colleen Shogan, and a bipartisan group of women leaders, the WSCC is proud to be leading the nationwide commemorations of this historic centennial.

The Commission’s mission is to elevate the history of the suffrage movement through celebratory projects and dynamic partnerships. With new leadership and a renewed commitment to telling the untold stories of the women who waged and won the fight for the vote, the WSCC is spearheading efforts across the U.S. to ensure that this milestone of American democracy is honored throughout 2020.

In this report, we highlight the Commission’s progress, plans, and partnerships for the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 2020. We detail the Commission’s signature programs—from podcasts to a webstore to a historian article series—and introduce the WSCC’s two largest initiatives, Forward Into Light and the National Suffrage Symposium. We also detail a selection of the Commission’s key partnerships, including our efforts to tell the suffrage story through public art across the country. And finally, we highlight efforts by our federal partners, including the White House, Congress, the U.S. Mint, and the U.S. Postal Service, to ensure a robust centennial year.
LEADERSHIP STRIDES

On December 3, 2019, the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) voted to confirm Anna Laymon as the agency’s new Executive Director.

“It is my honor to work with such a passionate, committed group of women leaders to coordinate the nationwide centennial efforts throughout 2020,” said Anna Laymon, WSCC Executive Director. “I am deeply committed to the Commission’s mission to commemorate this milestone of American democracy and to honor the brave and brilliant suffragists who fought so radically for women’s equality 100 years ago.”

“The Commission is dedicated to working with our partners across the country to tell the untold stories of the women and men who dedicated their lives to the fight for the vote,” Laymon added. “In my new role, it is my privilege to ensure that this story is taught, told, and remembered not just in 2020, but for the next 100 years.”

Laymon has spent her career in dynamic, women-centered organizations across the United States. Previously, she served as WSCC Acting Executive Director, after Rebecca Kleefisch stepped down from the post in October 2019. Before that, Laymon was the WSCC Director of National Programs and Strategic Engagement, starting in April 2019. Prior to joining the WSCC, Laymon worked as the Director of Partnerships and Public Programs for the National Woman’s Party, the historic nonprofit founded in 1913 to ensure the passage of a suffrage amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In that role, she built a coalition of women’s historians and women-centered nonprofits to elevate women’s history and explore issues of women’s equality.

“Laymon brings valuable leadership experience to our nationwide efforts to celebrate this incredible victory for women in American history,” said Susan Combs, Chairwoman of the WSCC. “Her commitment to women-centered organizations and her experience in partnerships, programs, and coalition-building make her the perfect candidate to lead this Commission.”

Under the leadership of Chairwoman Susan Combs, Vice Chairwoman Colleen Shogan, and Executive Director Anna Laymon, the WSCC continues to spearhead the nationwide efforts to commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment.
Throughout 2020, the U.S. will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women’s right to vote. The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission is leading several signature projects, initiatives, and campaigns that honor the women and men who ensured the passage of the 19th Amendment. From the Commission's nationwide Forward Into Light campaign to our partnership with libraries across the U.S., the WSCC will commemorate the history, celebrate the story, and educate future generations of learners and leaders.

**Project #SuffrageStories**

In June 2020, the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission will send 18,000 children's suffrage history books to 6,000 underserved libraries across the U.S. ensuring that the story of women's fight for the vote is accessible to learners and future changemakers in diverse communities nationwide. For the youngest readers, the WSCC has created a custom centennial edition of *Around America to Win the Vote* with author Mara Rockliff and Candlewick Press. For middle readers, the WSCC has selected the new young reader edition of New York Times bestselling book *The Woman's Hour* by Elaine Weiss. And for high school readers, the Commission has selected the National Park Service's 19th Amendment suffrage handbook *Women Making History*.

**WSCC Podcasts**

Launching July 2020, the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission is producing two suffrage history podcasts—one for children and one for adults—with podcast leader PRX. By telling one of the most powerful stories in the history of American democracy through a modern, free medium that provides direct access to a diverse, national audience, the WSCC podcasts will educate listeners about this critical movement for change and inspire Americans towards leadership and civic engagement.

**The Suff Shop**

On November 29, 2019, the WSCC launched The Suff Shop, the Commission’s online webstore dedicated to creating original and historical suffrage centennial merchandise. The Suff Shop is an essential tool in the Commission’s mission to educate and inspire, and we are thrilled to be able to make the official centennial merchandise available to Americans nationwide throughout 2020. Look for new merchandise for Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and throughout the summer of 2020, as the WSCC tells the story of women’s fight for the vote through The Suff Shop.

**Yellow Rose Journal**

To kick off the Commission’s Women’s History Month initiatives in March 2020, the country’s 25 leading historians have written original suffrage history articles for the WSCC’s blog, *The Yellow Rose Journal*. The series, “Suff Buffs, Your Not So Average Herstory Series,” will bring together an unparalleled anthology of suffrage literature available free of charge for students, educators, and lifelong learners. The articles will be published weekly on the Commission’s website and conclude on August 26, 2020, the ratification date of the 19th Amendment.
Throughout 2020, the U.S. will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women’s constitutional right to vote. Suffragists began their organized fight in 1848 when they demanded the right to vote during the first women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. For the next 72 years, women leaders lobbied, marched, picketed, and protested for the right to the ballot. The U.S. Congress finally passed the 19th Amendment on June 4, 1919, and the necessary 36 states had ratified the amendment by August 26, 1920, marking the single largest expansion of voting rights in United States history and a major victory in the ongoing effort to perfect American democracy.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women’s constitutional right to vote, buildings and landmarks across the country will light up in purple and gold on August 26, 2020 as part of the Commission’s nationwide Forward Into Light campaign, named in honor of the historic suffrage slogan, “Forward through the Darkness, Forward into Light.”

Governors, mayors, cities, towns, businesses, nonprofits, and the Commission’s federal partners are committing to the Forward Into Light campaign to celebrate this milestone of American democracy in the official suffrage colors of purple and gold.
As part of our centennial celebrations, the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) is organizing the National Suffrage Symposium (NSS). Throughout the week of May 9-17, 2020, we will be convening conversations at museums, institutions, and historical sites across the country to spark a national dialogue about suffrage history and its legacy.

Public programs for the National Suffrage Symposium will include suffrage history themed author talks, documentary film screenings, musical concerts, open houses, scavenger hunts, special exhibits, panel discussions, and more.

The Library of Congress, National Archives, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, U.S. Capitol Historical Society, One Woman One Vote Film Festival, and the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center are the founding partners of the National Suffrage Symposium. Our list of partners is growing every day as we build this signature WSCC initiative to inspire and educate Americans during this once-in-a-lifetime milestone of American democracy.
KICKING OFF THE SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL AT THE NATIONAL ROSE PARADE®

The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) partnered with Pasadena Celebrates 2020, an initiative of the National Women’s History Alliance (NWHA), to bring the suffrage story to the big stage at the New Year’s Day Rose Parade®. With more than 37 million viewers across America, bringing the suffrage story to the Rose Parade® was an unparalleled opportunity to reach millions with the story of the brave and brilliant suffragists and to create anticipation for commemorations throughout 2020.

The Pasadena Celebrates 2020 “Years of Hope, Years of Courage” float’s inclusion in the parade marks the beginning of nationwide celebrations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which secured women’s constitutional right to vote. The float’s theme tied into the overarching theme of the annual Rose Parade®, “The Power of Hope.” The Rose Parade® presented the float with the “Most Outstanding Presentation of the Rose Parade® Theme” award.

The Commission was honored to be involved in the project and to work together with our partners nationwide to celebrate the beginning of the 2020 centennial. “This fabulous float, along with the nationwide events and activities planned for 2020, are all about sharing the history and untold stories of the women’s suffrage movement," said Jennifer Siebel Newsom, First Partner of California and one of 14 commissioners of the WSCC. “I’m proud that my home state of California kicked off the centennial year with the ‘Years of Hope, Years of Courage’ float where participants united to amplify the history of the women’s suffrage movement in the annual Rose Parade®.”

Five descendants of suffrage leaders joined leaders from across the country to participate in the parade. Those riding the float included Michelle Duster, great-granddaughter of Ida B. Wells; Coline Jenkins, great-great-granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Marci Magnatta, a 5th generation distant relative of Susan B. Anthony; Ernestine (Tina) Martin Wyatt, great-great-great-grandniece of Harriet Ross Tubman; and Kenneth B. Morris Jr., great-great-great-grandson of Frederick Douglass. Joining the descendants of suffrage leaders, 100 women and men representing the thirty-six states that ratified the 19th Amendment walked behind the float wearing purple and gold replica sashes and carrying banners provided by the WSCC.

The suffrage movement united women and men across the country to fight for women’s right to vote, and the Commission was thrilled to celebrate this milestone in American democracy and kick off our country’s 2020 celebrations in the Rose Parade®.
WSCC PARTNER PROJECTS

The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission is partnering with dozens of organizations, institutions, and leaders throughout the United States to commemorate the centennial of women’s right to vote in 2020. Three of our partnerships represent the Commission’s commitment to public art, to telling the stories of the suffrage movement in ways that make women’s history visible and accessible, and to ensuring that this history is taught, told, and remembered for the next 100 years.

LUCY BURNS MUSEUM
The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission permanently loaned statues of suffragists Lucy Burns (L) and Dora Lewis (R) to the Lucy Burns Museum at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, VA. Today, the Workhouse Arts Center is a dynamic, multi-use artistic space, but in 1917, the Arts Center was the site of the Occoquan Workhouse, where 72 suffragists were imprisoned for picketing the White House in support of women’s suffrage. The statues were unveiled on January 23, 2020.

TURNING POINT SUFFRAGIST MEMORIAL
The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission will permanently loan statues of suffragists Alice Paul (L), Mary Church Terrell (M), and Carrie Chapman Catt (R) to the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, a national monument in Virginia dedicated to honoring, memorializing, and educating future generations about the suffragists who fought for and won the right to vote for American women. The statues will be unveiled at the Memorial’s grand opening on August 26, 2020.

MEMPHIS SUFFRAGE MONUMENT
The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission will permanently loan statues of Tennessee legislator Joe Hanover (L), who ensured that the suffrage amendment came to a vote in Tennessee, and suffragist Ida B. Wells, to the Memphis Suffrage Monument in Memphis, TN. The statues will be unveiled at the Monument’s grand opening on March 27, 2020.
FROM CONGRESS, THE WHITE HOUSE, AND THE U.S. MINT: COMMEMORATIVE SUFFRAGE COIN BILL IS SIGNED INTO LAW

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (S.1235/H.R.2423) was signed into law by President Trump on November 25, 2019. The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission worked closely with the sponsoring Members to ensure passage of this landmark legislation, and members of the Commission attended the commemorative bill signing at the White House. The coin and the companion centennial medal will be released in 2020. To learn more about the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act and the bills and resolutions in the current Congress that honor the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, all Americans are invited to stay up-to-date with the WSCC's Suffrage Legislation Tracker, available at womensvote100.org/news.

FROM THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE: SUFFRAGE STAMP UNVEILED

In October 2020, the U.S. Postal Service unveiled the design of its centennial suffrage stamp. With this stamp, the Postal Service commemorates the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees women the right to vote. Inspired by historic photographs, the stamp features a stylized illustration of suffragists marching in a parade or other public demonstration. The clothes they wear and the banners they bear display the official colors of the National Woman's Party — purple, white, and gold.
CONCLUSION

As we kick off 2020 and the centennial year of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission remains committed to its mission to share the stories and history of the women’s suffrage movement in communities across the United States. Through our signature programs and robust partnerships, the WSCC is honored to be leading the national efforts to tell an inclusive, diverse, and complete history of the 19th Amendment and the fight for the vote. Throughout this year, the WSCC will announce additional projects and initiatives, continue to develop impactful partnerships, and be poised, always, to do our part to uplift this history for all Americans.

WSCC COMMISSIONERS

Chairwoman, Susan Combs | Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior
Vice Chairwoman, Colleen Shogan | Senior Vice President and Director of the David Rubenstein Center for White House History, White House Historical Association

Jovita Carranza | Administrator, Small Business Administration
Marjorie Dannenfelser | President, Susan B. Anthony List
Heather Higgins | CEO, Independent Women’s Voice
Karen Hill | President and CEO, Harriet Tubman Home
Kay Coles James | President, The Heritage Foundation
Julissa Marenco | Assistant Secretary, Smithsonian Institution
Senator Barbara Mikulski (Ret.)
Nicola Miner | Instructor and Philanthropist
Cleta Mitchell | Partner, Foley & Lardner, LLP
Penny Nance | President, Concerned Women For America
Jennifer Siebel Newsom | Filmmaker and First Partner of California
Debra Steidel Wall | Deputy Archivist, U.S. National Archives

Anna Laymon | Executive Director