

APPEAL

FOR A

SIXTEENTH AMENDMENT.

TO THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES:

Having celebrated our Centennial birthday with a National jubilee, let us now dedicate the dawn of the Second Century to securing justice to Woman.

For this purpose we ask you to circulate a petition to Congress, just issued by the "*National Woman Suffrage Association*," asking an amendment to the United States Constitution; that shall prohibit the several States from disfranchising any of their citizens on account of Sex. We have already sent this petition throughout the country for the signatures of those men and women who believe in the citizen's right to vote.

To see how large a petition each State rolls up, and to do the work as expeditiously as possible, it is necessary that some person, or society in each State and District should take the matter in charge, print, and send out petitions to reliable friends in every county, urging upon all thoroughness and haste. When the petitions are returned, they should be pasted together, neatly rolled up, the number of signatures marked on the outside, with the name of the State, and forwarded to Sarah Andrews Spencer, Chairman of our Congressional Committee, corner of L. and 7th street, Washington, D. C. On the 16th and 17th of January, 1877, we shall hold our 8th Annual Convention at the Capitol and ask a hearing on our petition before Congress.

Having petitioned to our law-makers, State and National, for years, many from weariness and despair have vowed to appeal no more; for our petitions, say they, by the tens of thousands, are piled up mid the National archives unheeded and ignored. Yet, it is possible to roll up such a mammoth petition, borne into Congress on the shoulders of stalwart men, that we can no longer be neglected or forgotten. Statesmen and politicians, alike, are conquered by majorities. We urge the women of this country to make now the same united effort for their own rights, that they did for the slaves at the south, when the 13th amendment was pending. Then a petition of over 300,000 was rolled up by the leaders of the suffrage movement, and presented in the Senate by the Hon. Charles Sumner. But the leading statesmen who welcomed woman's untiring efforts to secure the black man's freedom, frowned down the same demands when made for herself. Is not liberty as sweet to her as to him? Are not the political disabilities of Sex as grievous as those of color? Is not a civil rights bill that shall open to woman the college doors, the trades and professions—that shall secure her personal and property rights, as necessary for her protection, as for that of the colored man?

And yet the highest judicial authorities have decided that the spirit and letter of our National Constitution are not broad enough to protect Woman in her political rights; and for the redress of her wrongs they remand her to the State. If this Magna Charta of Human Rights can be thus narrowed by judicial interpretations in favor of class legislation, then must we demand an amendment that in clear, unmistakable language, shall declare the equality of all citizens before the law.

Women are citizens, first of the United States, and second of the State wherein they reside: hence, if robbed by State authorities of any right founded in nature or secured by law, they have the same right to national protection against the State, as against the infringements of any foreign power. If the United States government can punish a woman for voting in one State, why has it not the same power to protect her in the exercise of that right in every State? The Constitution declares it the duty of Congress to guarantee to every State a republican form of government, to every citizen equality of rights. This is not done in States where women, thoroughly qualified, are denied admission into colleges, which their property is taxed to build and endow; where they are denied the right to practice law and are thus debarred from one of the most lucrative professions; where they are denied a voice in the government, and thus while suffering all the ills that grow out of the giant evils of intemperance, prostitution, war, heavy taxation and political corruption, stand powerless to effect any reform. Prayers, tears, psalm-singing and expostulation are light in the balance, compared with that power at the ballot box that converts opinions into law. If Women propose, let them demand the ballot in their own hands, that they may have a direct power in the government. Thus only can they improve the conditions of the outside world and purify the home. As political equality is the door to civil, religious and social liberty, here must our work begin.

Constituting as we do one-half the people, bearing the burdens of one-half the National debt, equally responsible with man for the education, religion and morals of the rising generation, let us with united voice send forth a protest against the present political status of Woman, that shall echo and re-echo through the land. In view of the numbers and character of those making the demand, this should be the largest petition ever yet rolled up in the old world or the new;—a petition that shall settle forever the popular objection that "Women do not want to vote."

ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, Pres.
MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE, Chairman Ex. Com.
SUSAN B. ANTHONY, Cor. Sec.

Tenafly, N. J., Nov. 10, 1876.



Our Mothers Before Us: Women and Democracy, 1789-1920

RECONSTRUCTING AMERICA

DOCUMENT 19

FACSIMILE



“Appeal for a Sixteenth Amendment” from the National Woman Suffrage Association

NOVEMBER 10, 1876

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS REFERRED TO COMMITTEES

HR44A-H8.4

44TH CONGRESS

RECORDS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RECORD GROUP 233

NATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D.C.