

Community Voices from four local women: AAUW's Young Women Leaders celebrate 100 years of voting rights

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The fight for the 19th amendment was no easy task, so it's important to celebrate the centennial

Editor's note: To commemorate the centennial anniversary of the 19th amendment this month, Morgan Hill Life invited four student members of the Young Women Leaders group, associated with Morgan Hill's Association of American University Women, to share their thoughts on what this historic event means to them as they take their first steps into the voting booth.

With the presidential election just months away, voting is something on everybody's mind. Additionally, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of a crucial moment in voting history: the ratification of women's right to vote. The fight for the 19th amendment was no easy task. In 1848, the Seneca Falls Convention — the first Women's Convention in U.S. history — ushered the beginning of the Women's Suffrage Movement through the creation of the Declaration of Sentiments, which described the grievances of women and their innate right to be equal citizens to their male counterparts. It took another 72 years of marching and imprisonment before they achieved the legal right to vote.



"Voting is a significant part of the democratic process. However, filling in a bubble means much more than representing your voice. Rather, the celebration of the suffrage movement shows us not only how far we have come, but also how much further we have in the fight for women's equality whether it be in the workplace, household, or the polls. In today's celebration, I thank the young women of the past for providing today's young women the steppingstones to dream far beyond basic fundamental human rights. I thank them for allowing young women, like me, to seek greatness and choose their destinies. I thank them for representing the epitome of resilience. Their leadership, poise, and persistence is a lesson for us all to carry their legacy and finish what they started, shattering the glass ceiling one march at a time".

— Hassti Tirgardoorn, GECA Senior

“Historically, women have been berated for expressing interest in a career; in a life beyond just family; even in their own opinions. Although there is still a trying road ahead, it’s crucial to take a step back, look at where we started, and understand the larger picture: this is a momentous occasion. It’s one that generations of women have fought for and one that will forever be celebrated with utmost importance. This progression at its core represents a positive change. My right to vote gives me the right to opportunities and success. It gives me the chance to advocate for myself and act on my choices. Ultimately, it gives me my destiny. For this, I thank all those valiant women of the past who have fought for the right to my future. ”



– Ria Deshpande, GECA Sophomore



“Although the anniversary is an essential landmark of the progress we’ve made thus far, it also underscores how the de facto extension of suffrage to non-white women across this last century was in truth staggered and incomplete. Poll taxes and literacy tests were just two of the obstacles Black Americans faced. Women of color, immigrant women, and indigenous women were often kept from voting by citizenship barriers. This year, I will celebrate how far we’ve come, but also look forward to where we have yet to progress. To me, the 100 year anniversary means this: if our gender equity isn’t intersectional, it’s not gender equity at all.”

– Darice Wong, U.C. Berkeley sophomore

“Today, as Young Women Leaders, we will share our views as we carry the baton that those women passed on decades ago and create the world they sought to live in. It only seems fitting that this year, we push for increased voter participation. Our history has long consisted of the fight for equal voting rights—including the Suffragette Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and even with the 2020 election coming up during a pandemic. The 100-year anniversary of women’s suffrage reminds us of the value of young women in politics and continues to motivate us to promote intersectional equality.”



– Sruchi Patel, U.C. Los Angeles