

Lay Day 2020

# Proclamation

Bar Association of Erie County



Whereas, the United States is commemorating the centennial of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

Whereas, the text that would become the 19th Amendment in 1920 was first proposed in Congress in 1878;

Whereas many states granted women the right to vote in advance of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. They included Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, California, Oregon, Montana, Arizona, Kansas, Alaska, Illinois, North Dakota, Indiana, Nebraska, Michigan, Arkansas, New York, South Dakota, and Oklahoma;

Whereas Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan were the first states to ratify the 19th Amendment, all on June 10, 1919, six days after it was approved by Congress. Tennessee was the 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment, the number then required to incorporate it into the U.S. Constitution and make it the law of the land;

Whereas, although formal voting rights could no longer be denied because of race or sex after ratification of the 15th and 19th Amendments, many voters still faced ballot restrictions, including registration rules, literacy tests, poll taxes, and moral and residency requirements;

Whereas, there were 81.3 million women registered to vote in the United States as of 2018, comprising 53% of the electorate;

Whereas, American women fought for, and won, the vote through their voice and action. The women’s suffrage movement forever changed America, expanding representative democracy and inspiring other popular movements for constitutional change and reform.

Whereas the 2020 Law Day theme is “Your Vote, Your Voice, Our Democracy: The 19th Amendment at 100.”

Now, therefore, the Bar Association of Erie County does hereby proclaim the Week of May 1, 2020 as Law Week, with our own celebration of Law Day taking place on April 30, 2020. We urge everyone to observe this day by learning about the Nineteenth Amendment and its legacies, and honoring the significance of this Amendment.