



Good afternoon, Chairman May and Commission members. My name is Anna Laymon, and I am the Director of National Programs for the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission.

From 2019-2020, the U.S. will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's right to vote, and the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission urges the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission to commemorate this historic centennial by supporting H.R. 473/S. 1705 and the building of the first monument and outdoor statue in our nation's capital to honor the brave suffragists who never gave up the fight for equality.

Suffragists began their organized fight for women's enfranchisement in 1848 when they demanded the right to vote during the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. *"We hold these truths to be self-evident,"* they proclaimed, *"that all men and women are created equal."*

For the next 72 years, an estimated 5 million women lobbied, marched, picketed, and protested for the right to the ballot. When the 19th Amendment was fully ratified into the U.S. Constitution in 1920, 27 million American women were granted access to the ballot, marking the single largest expansion of voting rights in United States history. Today, more than 68 million women vote in elections because of the women and men who waged and won the fight for the vote. We believe that the Every Word We Utter Monument is the perfect tribute to the legacy of the suffragists.

Today, fewer than eight percent of all memorials in the United States honor women. There is no national memorial commemorating the suffrage movement. The Every Word We Utter Monument, which features suffrage leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Stanton Blatch, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Alice Paul, and Ida B. Wells, tells the story of American democracy, of an unprecedented movement for change, and of the diversity of thought and action so often forgotten in the history of the fight for the vote. Through this vital public art, which will come at no cost to the taxpayer, we have the opportunity to share the story of the 19th Amendment and ensure that the legacy of the suffragists is remembered and celebrated for the next 100 years. The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission believes that in establishing the Every Word We Utter Monument in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Congress and the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission will have taken a vital step towards commemorating the history of the 19th Amendment and educating future generations of learners and changemakers about the power of civic engagement.

I'll leave you with the words of one of the leaders of the suffrage movement, Alice Paul, who said it best: *"I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality."* On behalf of the brave women who committed their lives to that ordinary equality, and in pursuit of the ordinary equality of women's representation in public art, we urge your support of the building of the Every Word We Utter Monument in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for your time and consideration.