This year, 2020, marks a century since the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which expanded the American electorate to include women. At face value, this constitutional change should have been a final victory for voting rights, a last chapter in the universal suffrage movement that advocated first for enfranchising all white men and then for both Black and women’s suffrage. Yet, as evidenced by previous units of the Suffrage Syllabus, the fight for equal
enfranchisement did not end in 1920, and has not ended still. The unfinished business of the 19th Amendment lies in addressing the many ways in which the United States continues to fall short of ensuring voting equality for all.

Gender identity remains relevant to the electoral process. Women have voted at higher rates than men in every election since 1964, yet they remain drastically underrepresented in elected positions. However, modern voting rights activists use an intentionally broader and more intersectional lens than did the proponents of the 19th Amendment. Suffrage is intimately tied to citizenship, and the effective denial of the franchise to many immigrants, residents of US territories, and indigenous people leaves gaping holes in the American electorate. Additionally, many citizens—especially those who are people of color, transgender, nonbinary, previously incarcerated, young, or low-income—must overcome pervasive voter suppression efforts at the state and federal levels, ranging from strict voter ID laws and voting roll purges to felony disenfranchisement and gerrymandering. In response to these ongoing injustices, voter mobilization organizations are working to increase civic engagement across party lines, especially among young voters and historically underrepresented communities.

The suffrage movement has come a long way over the past century, but it is clear that the voting equality movement is far from over. And as for the next century? With continued advocacy, education, and resistance, America could be closer than ever to achieving truly equal enfranchisement—the elusive goal of one person, one vote—as we together weave the brilliant and variegated fabric of We the People.

Gender and Voting Patterns:

https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/equal-rights-amendment-explained

https://cawp.rutgers.edu/footnotes/gender-gap-voting-setting-record-straight

Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant, “How Sex and Gender Influence How We Vote,” The Conversation, November 13, 2018.  

https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/more-women-are-holding-political-office-but-not-everywhere/


Citizenship: 

https://www.texasobserver.org/congressional-democrats-are-investigating-texas-targeting-of-naturalized-citizen-voters/

https://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/states-and-territories/


https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/noncitizen-voting-trump/


**Voter Suppression:**


Carnegie Corporation of New York, “11 Barriers to Voting,” November 1, 2019. https://www.carnegie.org/topics/topic-articles/voting-rights/11-barriers-voting/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIpOeq-oaq6gIVY-W1Ch3g4QC0EAAYAiAAEglXovD_BwE


https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-voter-id-impact/

Civic Engagement and Renewal:

https://www.fairvote.org/what_is_proportional_representation_and_why_do_we_need_this_reform

https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/voting-reform


https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2019/12/14/478750/strengthening-democracy-modern-civics-education/


Get Involved!

Advocacy and organizing for equal enfranchisement continue today. Regardless of identity, age, geographic location, party affiliation, or previous political experience, you can continue the fight for voting equality—a pillar of our constitutional democracy—by engaging with the organizations below and with groups in your local community.

Black Voters Matter Fund: Organization working to increase voter registration and turnout and advocating for electoral reform policies.
https://blackvotersmatterfund.org/

EMILY’s List’s WOMEN VOTE!: Initiative mobilizing women voters on behalf of EMILY’s List’s endorsed pro-choice Democratic women candidates.
https://www.emilyslist.org/pages/entry/women-vote

http://www.equalrightsnow.org

Fair Fight: Georgia-based organization advocating for fair elections and voter participation.
https://fairfight.com/

Fair Vote: Nonpartisan organization advocating for structural electoral reforms, such as ranked choice voting.
https://www.fairvote.org/

National Conference on Citizenship’s Civic Renewal Initiative: Initiative of a congressionally chartered organization that is building a network of universities, nonprofits, and public officials to lead civic renewal in communities.
https://ncoc.org/civic-renewal-initiative/

RepresentWomen: Organization researching representation of women in politics and educating PACs, donors, party leaders, and elected officials about reforms.
https://www.representwomen.org/
Rock the Vote: Largest nonpartisan organization solely dedicated to mobilizing the youth vote.  
https://www.rockthetvote.org/  

Stand Up Republic: Cross-partisan organization pushing for electoral reform, accountable government, and healthy media.  
https://standuprepublic.com/  

Think Social Impact’s Woke Vote: Nonprofit program investing in long-term voter engagement and the mobilization of voters of color.  
https://wokevote.us/  

When We All Vote: Nonpartisan celebrity-founded nonprofit working to increase voter turnout.  
https://www.whenweallvote.org/  

Winning 4 Women: Organization building a grassroots network of right-of-center women leaders and supporting free-market conservative women running for federal office.  
https://winningforwomen.com/  

Women Creating Change: New York–based charity working to help women develop and strengthen the skills and resources needed to engage in local civic life.  
https://wccny.org/