



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



August is an important month on the Vision 2020 calendar. It was in August of 1920, 95 years ago, that the 19th Amendment to the Constitution became law. Congress later designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day to mark the historic event that enfranchised over half the U.S. population.

The right to vote for women came 133 years after the signing of the Constitution. The women suffragists, who struggled for 72 years to win this fundamental right of citizenship, believed their victory signaled the first step towards full gender equality. We know today, almost a century later, that was not the case. And that's why Vision 2020 was born.

I've been writing my recent Huffington Post blogs on the Vision 2020 goal themes, and the one posted last week ([Is Civic Engagement an On-Ramp to the Women's Equality Expressway?](#)) is on civic engagement. The suffragists demonstrated the ultimate in civic engagement in their time, marching, picketing the White House, even going to jail to achieve women's voting rights, and the Vision 2020 coalition of Delegates nationwide and nearly 100 Allied organizations are committed to completing their unfinished agenda.

To succeed, it is essential that all parts of the coalition work together, and that's why Vision 2020 is the Coalition Convener. The **Fifth National Congress** in Nashville, **October 26-28**, will bring together leaders from across the U.S., from organizations large and small, from communities in all 50 states, to collaborate for collective impact in achieving women's economic, political and social equality.

We remember our history, to "honor the past," and in Nashville we will hear the story of Harry Burn, the young Tennessee legislator who cast the deciding vote for women's suffrage after his mother wrote him a letter that encouraged his affirmative vote and reminded him, "Don't forget to be a good boy." We'll celebrate the role of Tennessee as the 36th and last state needed to ratify the 19th Amendment.

We will "enrich the present" by learning from each other about successful efforts to increase the numbers of women in senior leadership, to close the gender gap in pay and retirement income, to teach young girls and boys to value gender equality, and to register, educate and mobilize women to vote.

And we will "shape the future" by focusing on the year 2020, with the huge national celebration of the Centennial of women's voting rights, and the four years that lead up to it in a "Countdown to 2020."

So on August 26 this year, Vision 2020 will host its annual Toast to Tenacity, recognizing the contributions of the suffragists and setting its sights on the future of women's equality. Our Partners, including the National Constitution Center, and federal, state and local leaders will join us in lifting a glass of grape juice (Prohibition was in force in 1920) to toast the courage and perseverance of the women, and men, who achieved voting rights for all the women citizens of America.

Looking forward, when we get to Nashville in October, we're planning an interactive program and we need your participation! Please confirm your attendance [now](#).

Happy August,

