



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



January 2017

Suddenly it's 2017 and our target year of 2020 seems not so far away. That, of course, will be the time we not only celebrate the centennial of the 19th Amendment, but also when we present a public report card on our national progress toward women's economic, political and social equality in the United States. We will examine especially the issue of Shared Leadership among women and men in business and government, as a benchmark in the long process to complete the **unfinished business of women's equality**. With fewer than 1,100 days between now and 2020, the time will go quickly.

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Vision 2020's role as a national convener will be demonstrated again on January 30th when we host a strategy session to increase women's participation in the political process - as voters and as leaders in public service - with some of our major national allied organizations. The dual focus will be on encouraging more women to run for public office and inspiring **all** eligible women to vote in the 2020 election.

The session will be conducted at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Co-sponsoring with Vision 2020 are:

- The Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University
- The League of Women Voters of the United States
- Rock the Vote
- Nonprofit VOTE
- The Voter Participation Center

Also participating are leaders of more than 15 other national and regional allied

organizations. Our goal here is to work collaboratively in a model of collective impact, supporting each other's missions and achieving greater positive change together.

Over the holidays, I read some interesting articles and commentaries on women's progress (or lack thereof), and I commend to you two of those, both from the *New York Times*.

The first, in the category of good news, is "[A Talent War for Women](#)," - yes, **for**. It describes the efforts of tech companies to recruit more women to their boards. With mounting pressure for gender diversity in their corporate governance, those companies' efforts provide an important incentive and opportunity for women in the STEM fields. The other, a not so good news commentary, is a news analysis by Susan Chira, editor on gender issues for the *Times*, "[What Women Lost](#)." Chira underscores the real and potential negative impacts of the election results on the women's movement and the questions raised by those results about women's solidarity, since a majority of white women voted for Donald Trump instead of Hillary Clinton.

There are many messages in this column that demonstrate the importance of building bridges among women - across differences of age, race, class, political affiliation, etc. - and I believe that's where Vision 2020 comes in.

We have the opportunity and the challenge now to work harder and faster together toward the year 2020, to identify shared goals and visions and to find common ground. We need to learn from and listen to each other to understand and exercise the power we have or, as I have said many times over the years, **to think and act like the majority we are**.

As we work together to achieve Shared Leadership in business and government, beginning with the January 30 session and continuing through 2020, there will be many ways for each of you to participate. We invite your ideas and progress reports on your efforts.

\* \* \* \*

One change coming this year will be the Vision 2020 communications format. We will soon introduce a monthly newsletter filled with information from Vision 2020 Delegates and Allies across the nation. This Letter from the Chair will go away, but you can't escape me entirely. My message will be included in each newsletter.

Here's to high energy in 2017!



**P.S.** A historical footnote: One hundred years ago - 1917 - Montana's Jeannette Rankin became the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. An early 50/50 advocate, she said, "We're half the people; we should be half the Congress."



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