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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution granted American women the right to vote, a right known as women's suffrage, and was ratified on August 18, 1920; the year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote; this historic centennial offers an unparalleled opportunity to commemorate a milestone of democracy and to explore its relevance to the issues of equal rights today; and

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WHEREAS, The efforts of millions of American women, starting in the nineteenth century, played a decisive role in winning the right to vote; many of these women lived and fought for suffrage in Illinois, making the Prairie State a nationwide leader in the successful effort; and

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WHEREAS, In Illinois, the first women's suffrage association was established in Earlville in LaSalle County in 1855, just seven years after the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, which called for suffrage for women; the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association, the first statewide suffrage organization, was established in 1869; the organization became the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association in 1981; and

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1 WHEREAS, Illinois women's rights advocates included Jane
2 Addams, Frances Willard, and Ruth Hanna McCormick; these women
3 fought for the rights of all people; additionally, pioneer and
4 crusader Susan Brownell Anthony paved the way for the first
5 nationwide women's movement in the United States and led that
6 movement for over 50 years, which culminated in the adoption of
7 the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote in the
8 United States; and

9 WHEREAS, With the continued work of women's suffrage
10 organizations throughout Illinois led by prominent citizens,
11 women in Illinois secured the right to vote; along with
12 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony founded the National
13 Woman Suffrage Association in 1869; they also produced The
14 Revolution, a weekly publication that lobbied for women's
15 rights, and a three volume History of Woman Suffrage; and

16 WHEREAS, Susan B. Anthony and the National Woman Suffrage
17 Association gathered enough influence to lobby the U.S.
18 Congress for a constitutional amendment and saw the
19 introduction of the first women's suffrage amendment to the
20 United States Constitution in January 1878, which stated, "The
21 Right of citizens to vote shall not be abridged by the United
22 States or by any state on account of sex."; and

1 WHEREAS, With the continued work of several organizations,
2 including the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, the
3 Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Chicago Political
4 Equality League, the women's suffrage amendment to the United
5 States Constitution was introduced in every session of Congress
6 for the next 41 years until women in Illinois secured the right
7 to vote; and

8 WHEREAS, It was not until 1920, 14 years after Susan B.
9 Anthony's death, that the 19th amendment to the U.S.
10 Constitution granted American women the right to vote; the
11 ratification on August 18, 1920 ended almost a century of
12 protest; the Congress of the United States passed the 19th
13 Amendment on May 21, 1919, and the Senate passed the 19th
14 Amendment two weeks later; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1913, Illinois enacted the Presidential
16 Suffrage Bill, which gave Illinois women the right to vote in
17 federal and municipal elections that were not otherwise
18 restricted to men only by the Illinois Constitution; and

19 WHEREAS, On June 10, 1919, Illinois lawmakers in
20 Springfield made the Land of Lincoln the first state in the
21 nation to ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution,
22 the constitutional amendment that granted the right to vote to
23 women in all elections nationwide, including federal elections

1 for offices such as U.S. President; and

2 WHEREAS, Illinois holds a significant and unique role in
3 the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the
4 Constitution of the United States; we remember in this
5 commemoration the hopes and dreams of the hundreds of thousands
6 of Illinois women of all political parties who organized
7 themselves, from the 1870s into the 1910s, into the
8 half-century-long effort to win the right to vote in America;
9 therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
11 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we commemorate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage and
13 recognize 2020 as a year to celebrate a woman's right to vote
14 and the important role Illinois played in achieving that right
15 in the United States; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we recognize the Women's Vote Centennial
17 Initiative, a collaboration of women-centered institutions,
18 organizations, and scholars from across the U.S., which work to
19 ensure that this anniversary and the 72-year fight to achieve
20 it are remembered.