



Demanding an Equal Voice

This is the second in a series of monthly articles covering some of the history of the League of Women Voters, as well as the women's suffrage movement that led to the enactment of the 19th Amendment (August 26, 1920) and the creation of the League in Chicago on February 14, 1920.

February 14, 1920

The Congress Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

"There is a new battle cry... to demand an equal voice and leadership with the men of the councils directing the destinies of the political parties."

Carrie Chapman Catt addressed the 500 delegates at the opening session of the new League of Women Voters. She urged that the members adhere to a non-partisan course. "You need to get into the party not as a 'woman's auxiliary' but to fight for more than a 'me too' by convincing the men that you have the ability to open that tightly locked door that has shut you out and lead a successful drive for what you want. You have to convert them."

Catt warned about "Blind Partisans" - brought up in a party and unaware of where it stands on the issues - reasoning that a certain party is best because it stands for certain principles. She says that the League is going to educate women for active citizenship and that Democrats and Republicans must work together and work to be nonpartisan. Catt said, "Keep the flag flying for the principles of the Constitution. You need to keep five years ahead of the parties if you are to do your part."

"Do not go to the polls as a mere endorser of a platform that others have written for you in some back office... you should never vote for a ticket until it has been submitted to your intelligence and ratified by your conscience."

This is a summary of ideas from the keynote speech of Mrs. Catt. Thank you to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the Chicago Historical Society.

BE INFORMED AND VOTE

Celebrate the League of Women Voters and the 19th Amendment

1920 - 2020