

# Who Can Vote?

By D. A. Sharpe

Any citizen of the United States may register to vote through the County Government Office of the county in which he or she lives. It must be where you live and not, for example, where you are employed. You might live in Wise County, but your job is in Denton County. You are a Wise County voter.

That also means you may file as a candidate for election to a county office only in your county of residence where you are a registered voter. In most states, that candidacy filing is with the Chair of the political party in whose Primary Election the candidate wishes to run. That is the process in Texas.

In the beginning years of the government of the United States, only males were registered to vote. On May 21, 1919, U.S. Representative James R. Mann (1856-1922), a Republican from Illinois and chairman of the Suffrage Committee, proposed the House resolution to approve the Susan Anthony Amendment granting women the right to vote. The measure passed the House 304-89—a full 42 votes above the required two-thirds majority.

On June 19, 1919, the whole Congress of the United States, including the Senate, passed the proposal of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U. S. Constitution which would allow women to register to vote. Such proposal required the concurrence of the majority members in state legislatures of at least 2/3's of the states. The deciding vote came with the State of Tennessee Legislature approval, made by a 1 count deciding vote cast by 23-year old Representative Harry T. Burn, a Republican from McMinn County.

Wyoming became the first state to grant voting rights to women. It also was the first state to elect a female governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross (1876 – 1977) in 1924. This is a reason the state nickname for Wyoming is the “Equality State.” Gov. Ross subsequent served as the first female Direct of the United States Mint, 1933 – 1953.

Congress later established August 26 as the annual recognition of Women’s Equality Day.