

# **Duckworth Commemorates 100th Anniversary of Illinois Ratifying 19th Amendment**

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CHICAGO – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth today honored the 100th anniversary of Illinois’s ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, at a rally at the Thompson Center in Chicago. Duckworth joined Illinois Lieutenant Governor Julianna Stratton, Deputy Governor Sol Flores, State Senator Melinda Bush and Chicago City Clerk Anna Valencia, as well as the KLEO Center, Chicago Votes and League of Women Voters to honor the suffragists’ legacy as she advocates for expanding voting rights to the many Americans who still don’t have full access to the ballot box. Photos from today’s event are available [here](#).

“One hundred years ago, women raised their voices on the picket lines so we could make ours heard at the polls,” Duckworth said. “They risked safety and security, withstood hypocrisy and overcame misogyny, refusing to stay silent so that their

daughters and their daughters' daughters would inherit the democracy they deserved. I'm honored to join Lieutenant Governor Stratton, Deputy Governor Flores, Senator Bush and City Clerk Valencia today to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Illinois ratifying the 19th Amendment and pay tribute to the incredible women throughout history who have tirelessly fought for equality and justice.”

Duckworth's remarks as prepared for delivery are below:

Hello, everyone!

Thank you all for being here, and a special thank you to a few of Illinois' history-making, trailblazing women—Audra Wilson, City Clerk Valencia, State Senator Bush, Deputy Governor Flores and Lieutenant Governor Stratton—for celebrating this milestone with me.

We're here today to honor some of the founders of our nation who all too often don't get their due.

Founders whose gender or skin tone may not be represented on Mount Rushmore, but whose brilliance... whose resilience... helped ensure that the democracy we have today is strong and true.

Because this democracy wasn't just built by George Washington or Thomas Jefferson...

It wasn't perfected in the 18th century, when the ink dried on the four original pages of the Constitution...

It was shaped by women like Abigail Adams, who I named my first daughter after.

It was strengthened by suffragists like Sojourner Truth:

Who worked tirelessly to better the country that had kept her in chains...

Who used her emancipation to call for freedom and a voice for all—women, black, white, you name it.

It was formed by Illinoisans like Ida B. Wells, who demanded that women of color have a place at the forefront of the suffrage movement.

Forged by women like Mary Livermore...

Who channeled her frustration over women's inequality into action...

Spearheading Chicago's first-ever suffrage convention 150 years ago and marking Illinois as a leader in the fight for women's rights.

Our democracy was sharpened by the group of Illinoisans who traveled to D.C. in 1913, joining thousands of other women in their march down Pennsylvania Avenue...

Protesters who were vilified. Berated. Jostled and tripped and even jailed.

But who withstood it all to call for a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote.

And this union was made more perfect when Illinois became one of the first states to ratify the 19th Amendment 100 years ago today.

These women raised their voices on the picket lines so we could make ours heard at the polls.

They risked safety and security... withstood hypocrisy and overcame misogyny... refusing to stay silent so that their daughters and their daughters' daughters would inherit the democracy they deserved.

For that, we are forever in their debt.

But of course, every American's right to vote wasn't truly secured that day in 1919.

Nor was it secured in 1965, when Lyndon B. Johnson picked up a pen and signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

And it still isn't secure today...

Not when voter suppression tactics still block so many people of color from the ballot...

When voter roll purges are still common and some in power are still fighting to install modern-day poll taxes.

So what began at Seneca Falls and here in Chicago continues with us today, as it now falls to our generation to keep alive the work of yesterday's suffragists...

To keep pushing for bills like the Voting Rights Advancement Act to ensure that bigoted state laws don't disenfranchise any American.

It falls on us to keep fighting for that more perfect union...

To keep making our voices heard—whether that’s here on the Senate floor or anywhere else—so that finally... someday soon... every Illinoisan, and every other American, can make theirs heard at the ballot box.

Thank you.?