

SUFFRAGE *from page 1A*

Ironically, the leader of the Oregon's women's suffrage movement was Scott's older sister, Abigail Scott Duniway. Duniway worked for 40 years to amend Oregon's constitution to allow women to vote. She and other activists succeeded in getting a proposed amendment onto state-wide ballots five times, in 1884, 1900, 1906, 1908 and 1912, when it finally passed. At the age of 79, Duniway became the first Oregon woman to register to vote.

Soon after Olcott's address to the Oregon legislature, Rep. Sylvia Thompson, the only woman in the state's legislature, proposed a ratification resolution in the House of Representatives and Sen. Robert Farrell, a Republican from Multnomah County, proposed a similar resolution in the Oregon Senate.

There was little opposition expressed to the ratification, which had not been the case during the earlier attempts to guarantee women the right to vote in national elections.

While Thompson was a member of the legislature she was not referred to in print as Rep. Alexander but as Mrs. Alexander. She was, however, accorded the honor of being the sole sponsor of the bill, as she was the person most closely identified with the legislative actions needed to pass the amendment.

By Wednesday, Jan. 14, 1920, Oregon's House Joint Resolution No. 1, which ratified the 19th Amendment to the federal constitution, had been signed and filed with the Oregon Secretary of State.

The lasting importance of the 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment is an integral part of current voting rights discussions as the

House of Representatives passed the Voting Rights Advancement Act last year.

The new act seeks to restore many of the rights to vote and the protection of those rights that were lost when the Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that two major sections of the original act were unconstitutional.

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— **Leonora Kent, Member of Florence ORganizes**

Those found to be unconstitutional included Section 5, which requires certain states and local governments to obtain federal preclearance before implementing any changes to their voting laws or practices; and Section 4(b), which contains the coverage formula that determines which jurisdictions are subjected to preclearance based on their histories of discrimination in voting.

Leonora Kent, one of the leaders of local activist group Florence ORganizes (FOR), believes the struggle to obtain the right to vote has not ended for some Americans but may indeed be as important now as in the past.

“The passage of the 19th Amendment marked the end of a 72-year fight to guarantee women the right to vote. It is important that we celebrate the 100th anniversary of that momentous win, even as many continue to struggle today for equal access to the ballot box,” Kent said. “I feel heartened that the Voting Rights Advancement Act recently passed in the House. This bill was created to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to its full strength.”

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 includes the following require-

ments and authorizations:

- Allows a federal court to order states or jurisdictions to be covered for results-based violations, where the effect of a particular voting measure (including voter ID laws) is to lead to racial discrimination in voting and to deny citizens their right to vote;

- Increases transparency by requiring reasonable public notice for voting changes;

- Allows the attorney general authority to request federal observers be present anywhere in the country where there is a serious threat of racial discrimination in voting;

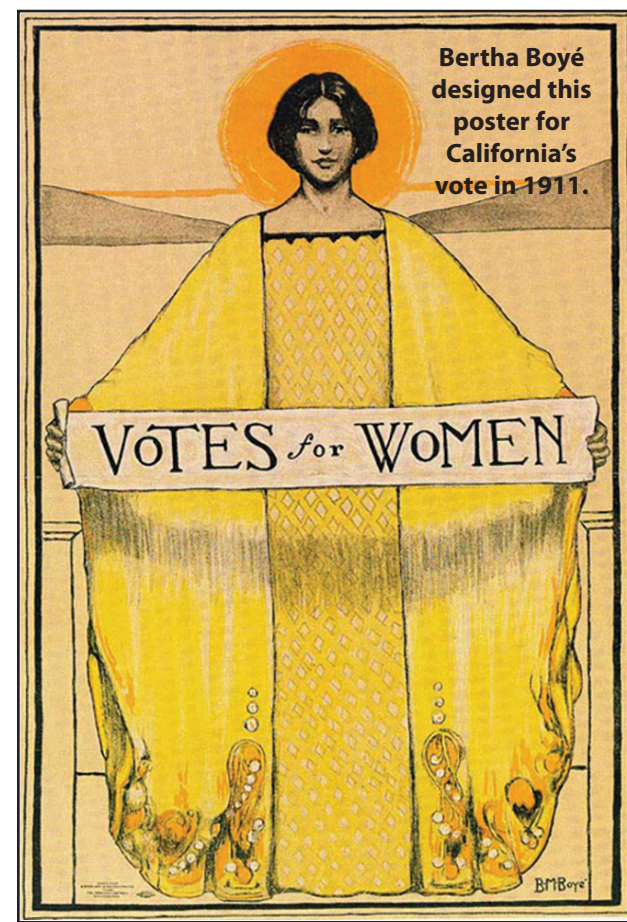
- Revises and tailors the preliminary injunction standard for voting rights actions to recognize that there will be cases where there is a need for immediate preliminary relief.

- Increases accessibility and protections for Native American and Alaska Native voters.

Last year, Kent and other FOR members dressed as suffragettes in the Florence Women's March, as well as Rosie the Riveter, Lady Liberty and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The march returns to Florence at noon on Saturday, Jan. 18, at the Florence United Methodist Church, 333 Kingwood St. For more information, visit forflorence.org.

One of the early organizations to form in support of the passage of the 19th Amendment was the League of Women Voters.

Formed in 1920 in anticipation of the battle to attain the right to vote for all wom-



en, the League of Women Voters of Lane County has compiled a list of the important steps along the path to ratification of the 19th Amendment and currently

is sponsoring an essay contest in conjunction with the anniversary and the league's centennial.

The “Women and the Vote” Essay Contest, co-

sponsored by WordCrafters, will have cash prizes for high school students in Lane County.

The 500-750-word essay must address some aspect of women and the right to vote. Some potential questions the students could address are:

- What is the history of women and the right to vote?
- Who were the individuals who led the effort to give women the right to vote and what were their roles?
- Why were women of color omitted from the 19th amendment?
- How significant are women voters in today's elections?

Prize money will be awarded to writers of essays judged to be among the top three entries and all submissions are due by March 12, 2020. For more information, see <https://lwvlc.org>.

In addition, the League of Women Voters of Lane County has events planned throughout 2020 honoring the 100th anniversary of the right to vote in Oregon.

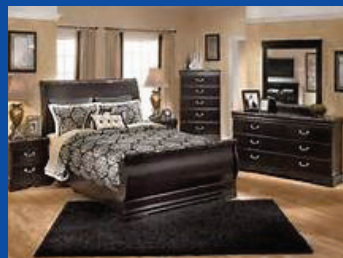
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