

Women's Equality Day
August 23, 2018
Closing Remarks

Thank you again for attending this event to honor our past, work on our present and hope for our future. Recently there was an editorial in the New York Times about how the suffrage movement betrayed Black women. As a matter of fact, all women of color were betrayed. Our foremothers made mistakes in their past. They made racist decisions and allowed their personal goals of getting "votes for women" to divide themselves from many of their sisters. In spite of this, it is important to honor their hard work and the sacrifices they made on our behalf while at the same time acknowledging their racist choices.

We are in divisive times that are being made more divisive by foreign interference in our elections and divisive rhetoric by some of our politicians who don't want us working together, rather, they want us to see each other as "others". We cannot let this happen again. The only way we can fight for our democracy is to not allow ourselves to be divided the way our sisters were.

The Supreme Court decided through Citizens United that corporations are people, yet constitutionally, women are still not people. The late Justice Antonin Scalia stated that "*Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't. Nobody ever thought that that's what it meant. Nobody ever voted for that.*" Without an ERA, we are leaving the decisions regarding our lives to this type of thinking. The only way we can fight for our democracy is to not allow ourselves to be divided the way our sisters allowed themselves to be separated from their sisters.

We can pass an Equal Rights Amendment which will protect the rights of all women including all non-binary and female identifying people. Let's work together to make the changes that will ensure that all people, constitutionally, are equal. Thank you!

Jeanne Roberts
August 23, 2018