

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 847

To establish a commission to ensure a suitable observance of the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing for women’s suffrage, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 5 (legislative day, APRIL 4), 2017

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. STABENOW, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish a commission to ensure a suitable observance of the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing for women’s suffrage, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission Act”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 2 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Establishment of Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission.
- Sec. 4. Duties of Centennial Commission.
- Sec. 5. Powers of Centennial Commission.
- Sec. 6. Centennial Commission personnel matters.
- Sec. 7. Termination of Centennial Commission.
- Sec. 8. Authorization of appropriations.

3 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) From 1919 to 1920, the Sixty-Sixth United
 6 States Congress debated, and State legislatures con-
 7 sidered, an amendment to the Constitution of the
 8 United States to provide suffrage for women.

9 (2) A proposed women’s suffrage amendment
 10 was first introduced in the United States Senate in
 11 1878 and was brought to a vote, unsuccessfully, in
 12 1887, 1914, 1918, and 1919. Finally, on May 21,
 13 1919, the House of Representatives approved a pro-
 14 posed amendment, followed by the Senate a few
 15 weeks later on June 4. Within days, the legislatures
 16 of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan had voted to
 17 ratify the amendment.

18 (3) On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the
 19 36th State to ratify the amendment, providing the
 20 support of three-fourths of States necessary under
 21 article V of the Constitution of the United States.

1 (4) The introduction, passage, and ultimate
 2 ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitu-
 3 tion of the United States were the culmination of
 4 decades of work and struggle by advocates for the
 5 rights of women across the United States and world-
 6 wide.

7 (5) Ratification of the 19th Amendment en-
 8 sured women could more fully participate in their
 9 democracy and fundamentally changed the role of
 10 women in the civic life of our Nation.

11 (6) The centennial offers an opportunity for
 12 people in the United States to learn about and com-
 13 memorate the efforts of the women’s suffrage move-
 14 ment and the role of women in our democracy.

15 (7) Commemorative programs, activities, and
 16 sites allow people in the United States to learn
 17 about the women’s suffrage movement and to com-
 18 memorate and honor the role of the ratification of
 19 the 19th Amendment in further fulfilling the prom-
 20 ise of the Constitution of the United States and pro-
 21 moting the core values of our democracy.

22 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE CENTEN-**
 23 **NIAL COMMISSION.**

24 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a com-
 25 mission to be known as the “Women’s Suffrage Centennial

1 Commission” (referred to in this Act as the “Centennial
2 Commission”).

3 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

4 (1) The Centennial Commission shall be com-
5 posed of 14 members, of whom—

6 (A) 2 shall be appointed by the President;

7 (B) 2 shall be appointed by the Speaker of
8 the House of Representatives;

9 (C) 2 shall be appointed by the minority
10 leader of the House of Representatives;

11 (D) 2 shall be appointed by the majority
12 leader of the Senate;

13 (E) 2 shall be appointed by the minority
14 leader of the Senate;

15 (F) 1 shall be the Librarian of Congress,
16 or the designee of the Librarian;

17 (G) 1 shall be the Archivist of the United
18 States, or the designee of the Archivist;

19 (H) 1 shall be the Secretary of the Smith-
20 sonian Institution, or the designee of the Sec-
21 retary; and

22 (I) 1 shall be the Director of the National
23 Park Service, or the designee of the Director.

24 (2) PERSONS ELIGIBLE.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The members of the
2 Commission shall be individuals who have
3 knowledge or expertise, whether by experience
4 or training, in matters to be studied by the
5 Commission. The members may be from the
6 public or private sector, and may include Fed-
7 eral, State, or local employees, former Members
8 of Congress, members of academia, nonprofit
9 organizations, or industry, or other interested
10 individuals.

11 (B) DIVERSITY.—It is the intent of Con-
12 gress that persons appointed to the Commission
13 under paragraph (1) be persons who represent
14 diverse economic, professional, and cultural
15 backgrounds.

16 (3) CONSULTATION AND APPOINTMENT.—

17 (A) IN GENERAL.—The President, Speaker
18 of the House of Representatives, minority lead-
19 er of the House of Representatives, majority
20 leader of the Senate, and minority leader of the
21 Senate shall consult among themselves before
22 appointing the members of the Commission in
23 order to achieve, to the maximum extent prac-
24 ticable, fair and equitable representation of var-

1 ious points of view with respect to the matters
2 to be studied by the Commission.

3 (B) COMPLETION OF APPOINTMENTS; VA-
4 CANCIES.—The President, Speaker of the
5 House of Representatives, minority leader of
6 the House of Representatives, majority leader
7 of the Senate, and minority leader of the Sen-
8 ate shall conduct the consultation under sub-
9 paragraph (A) and make their respective ap-
10 pointments not later than 60 days after the
11 date of enactment of this Act.

12 (4) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the membership
13 of the Commission shall not affect the powers of the
14 Commission and shall be filled in the same manner
15 as the original appointment not later than 30 days
16 after the vacancy occurs.

17 (c) MEETINGS.—

18 (1) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30 days
19 after the date on which all members of the Centen-
20 nial Commission have been appointed, the Centen-
21 nial Commission shall hold its first meeting.

22 (2) SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Centennial Com-
24 mission shall meet at the call of the Chair.

1 (B) FREQUENCY.—The Chair shall call a
 2 meeting of the members of the Centennial Com-
 3 mission not less frequently than once every 6
 4 months.

5 (3) QUORUM.—Seven members of the Centen-
 6 nial Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a
 7 lesser number may hold hearings.

8 (4) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—The Centennial
 9 Commission shall select a Chair and Vice Chair from
 10 among its members.

11 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF CENTENNIAL COMMISSION.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The duties of the Centennial
 13 Commission are as follows:

14 (1) To encourage, plan, develop, and execute
 15 programs, projects, and activities to commemorate
 16 the centennial of the passage and ratification of the
 17 19th Amendment.

18 (2) To encourage private organizations and
 19 State and local governments to organize and partici-
 20 pate in activities commemorating the centennial of
 21 the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment.

22 (3) To facilitate and coordinate activities
 23 throughout the United States relating to the centen-
 24 nial of the passage and ratification of the 19th
 25 Amendment.

1 (4) To serve as a clearinghouse for the collec-
2 tion and dissemination of information about events
3 and plans for the centennial of the passage and rati-
4 fication of the 19th Amendment.

5 (5) To develop recommendations for Congress
6 and the President for commemorating the centennial
7 of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amend-
8 ment.

9 (b) CONSULTATION.—In conducting its work, the
10 Centennial Commission shall consult the Historian of the
11 Senate and the Historian of the House of Representatives
12 when appropriate.

13 (c) REPORTS.—

14 (1) PERIODIC REPORT.—Not later than the last
15 day of the 6-month period beginning on the date of
16 the enactment of this Act, and not later than the
17 last day of each 3-month period thereafter, the Cen-
18 tennial Commission shall submit to Congress and
19 the President a report on the activities and plans of
20 the Centennial Commission.

21 (2) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 2
22 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
23 Centennial Commission shall submit to Congress
24 and the President a report containing specific rec-
25 ommendations for commemorating the centennial of

1 the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment
2 and coordinating related activities.

3 **SEC. 5. POWERS OF CENTENNIAL COMMISSION.**

4 (a) HEARINGS.—The Centennial Commission may
5 hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places,
6 take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Cen-
7 tennial Commission considers appropriate to carry out its
8 duties under this Act.

9 (b) POWERS OF MEMBER AND AGENTS.—If author-
10 ized by the Centennial Commission, any member or agent
11 of the Centennial Commission may take any action which
12 the Centennial Commission is authorized to take under
13 this Act.

14 (c) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The
15 Centennial Commission shall secure directly from any
16 Federal department or agency such information as the
17 Centennial Commission considers necessary to carry out
18 the provisions of this Act. Upon the request of the Chair
19 of the Centennial Commission, the head of such depart-
20 ment or agency shall furnish such information to the Cen-
21 tennial Commission.

22 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
23 the request of the Centennial Commission, the Adminis-
24 trator of the General Services Administration shall provide
25 to the Centennial Commission, on a reimbursable basis,

1 the administrative support services necessary for the Cen-
2 tennial Commission to carry out its responsibilities under
3 this Act.

4 (e) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
6 graph (2), the Centennial Commission is author-
7 ized—

8 (A) to procure supplies, services, and prop-
9 erty; and

10 (B) to make or enter into contracts, leases,
11 or other legal agreements.

12 (2) LIMITATION.—The Centennial Commission
13 may not enter into any contract, lease, or other legal
14 agreement that extends beyond the date of the ter-
15 mination of the Centennial Commission under sec-
16 tion 7(a).

17 (f) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Centennial Commission
18 may use the United States mails in the same manner and
19 under the same conditions as other departments and agen-
20 cies of the Federal Government.

21 (g) GIFTS, BEQUESTS, AND DEVISES.—The Centen-
22 nial Commission is authorized to solicit, accept, use, and
23 dispose of gifts, bequests, or devises of money, services,
24 or property, both real and personal, for the purpose of

1 covering the costs incurred by the Centennial Commission
 2 to carry out its duties under this Act.

3 (h) GRANTS.—The Centennial Commission is author-
 4 ized to award grants to States and the District of Colum-
 5 bia to support programs and activities related to com-
 6 memorating the centennial of the passage and ratification
 7 of the 19th Amendment.

8 **SEC. 6. CENTENNIAL COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

9 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Members of the
 10 Centennial Commission shall serve without compensation
 11 for such service.

12 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Cen-
 13 tennial Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, in-
 14 cluding per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with
 15 the applicable provisions of title 5, United States Code.

16 (c) STAFF.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chair of the Centennial
 18 Commission shall, in consultation with the members
 19 of the Centennial Commission, appoint an executive
 20 director and such other additional personnel as may
 21 be necessary to enable the Centennial Commission to
 22 perform its duties.

23 (2) COMPENSATION.—

24 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
 25 graph (B), the Chair of the Centennial Commis-

1 sion may fix the compensation of the executive
2 director and any other personnel appointed
3 under paragraph (1).

4 (B) LIMITATION.—The Chair of the Cen-
5 tennial Commission may not fix the compensa-
6 tion of the executive director or other personnel
7 appointed under paragraph (1) at a rate that
8 exceeds the rate payable for level IV of the Ex-
9 ecutive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5,
10 United States Code.

11 (d) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon
12 request of the Centennial Commission, the head of any
13 Federal department or agency may detail, on a reimburs-
14 able basis, any employee of that department or agency to
15 the Centennial Commission to assist it in carrying out its
16 duties under this Act.

17 (e) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-
18 TENT SERVICES.—The Chair of the Centennial Commis-
19 sion may procure temporary and intermittent services
20 under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

21 (f) ACCEPTANCE OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES.—Not-
22 withstanding section 1342 of title 31, United States Code,
23 the Centennial Commission may accept and use voluntary
24 and uncompensated services as the Centennial Commis-
25 sion deems necessary.

1 **SEC. 7. TERMINATION OF CENTENNIAL COMMISSION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Centennial Commission shall
3 terminate on the earlier of—

4 (1) the date that is 30 days after the date the
5 completion of the activities under this Act honoring
6 the centennial observation of the passage and ratifi-
7 cation of the 19th Amendment; or

8 (2) April 15, 2021.

9 (b) APPLICATION OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COM-
10 MITTEE ACT.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
12 graph (2), the provisions of the Federal Advisory
13 Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall apply to the
14 activities of the Centennial Commission under this
15 Act.

16 (2) EXCEPTION.—Section 14(a)(2) of such Act
17 (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Centennial
18 Commission.

19 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
21 priated to carry out this Act such sums as may be nec-
22 essary for the period of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.

23 (b) AMOUNTS AVAILABLE.—Amounts appropriated
24 in accordance with this section for any fiscal year shall

- 1 remain available until the termination of the Centennial
- 2 Commission.

