

SECTION 1

The Roots of Progressivism

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

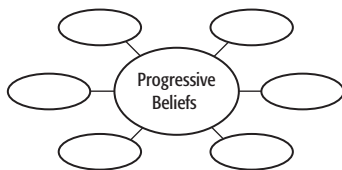
Progressivism was a diverse response to the problems posed by industrialism and modern life.

Key Terms and Names

progressivism, muckraker, Jacob Riis, commission plan, Robert La Follette, direct primary, initiative, referendum, recall, suffrage, Alice Paul, temperance, prohibition, socialism

Reading Strategy

Organizing As you read about the beginnings of progressivism, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by filling in the beliefs of progressives.



Reading Objectives

- **Discuss** the rise of the Progressive movement.
- **Evaluate** the impact of initiative, referendum, and recall, and of the Seventeenth Amendment.

Section Theme

Government and Democracy
Progressive reformers focused on political reforms to try to keep the nation true to its democratic ideals.

Preview of Events



★ An American Story ★



A police officer arresting two suffragists in Washington, D.C.

In 1917 suffragist Rose Winslow and several other women, including Alice Paul, founder of the National Woman's Party, were arrested for obstructing traffic and blocking sidewalks. The women had been picketing the White House to draw attention to the fact that women did not yet have the right to vote in federal elections. After being sentenced to seven months in jail, Paul, Winslow, and other women prisoners went on a hunger strike. Prison authorities forced the prisoners to eat. Winslow smuggled details of their plight out to the public:

“We have been in solitary for five weeks. . . . I have felt quite feeble the last few days—faint, so that I could hardly get my hair brushed, my arms ached so. But today I am well again. . . . [Alice Paul] dreaded forcible feeding frightfully, and I hate to think how she must be feeling. . . . I am really all right. If this continues very long I perhaps won't be. All the officers here know we are making this hunger strike [so] that women fighting for liberty may be considered political prisoners. . . . [W]e don't want women ever to have to do this over again.”

—quoted in *Jailed for Freedom*

The Rise of Progressivism

The struggle for the right of women to vote was only one of a series of reform efforts that transformed American society in the early 1900s. Historians refer to this era in American history—from about 1890 to 1920—as the Progressive Era.



CLICK HERE



HISTORY
Online 

Student Web Activity Visit the *American Vision* Web site at tav.glencoe.com and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 18** for an activity on the Progressive movement.

Who Were the Progressives? **Progressivism** was not a tightly organized political movement with a specific set of reforms. Instead, it was a collection of different ideas and activities. Progressives had many different views about how to fix the problems they believed existed in American society.

Progressives generally believed that industrialism and urbanization had created many social problems. Most agreed that the government should take a more active role in solving society's problems. Progressives belonged to both major political parties and usually were urban, educated middle-class Americans. Many leaders of the Progressive movement worked as journalists, social workers, educators, politicians, and members of the clergy.

Beginnings of Progressivism Progressivism was partly a reaction against laissez-faire economics and its emphasis on an unregulated market. After seeing the poverty of the working class and the filth and crime of urban society, these reformers began to doubt the free market's ability to address those problems. At the same time, they doubted that government in its present form could fix those problems. They concluded that government had to be fixed first before it could be used to fix other problems.

One reason progressives believed people could improve society was because they had a strong faith in science and technology. The application of scientific knowledge had produced the lightbulb, the telephone, the automobile, and the airplane. It had built skyscrapers and railroads. Science and technology had benefited people; thus progressives believed using scientific principles could also produce solutions for society.

The Muckrakers Among the first people to articulate Progressive ideas was a group of crusading journalists who investigated social conditions and political corruption. These writers became known as **muckrakers** after a speech by President Theodore Roosevelt:

“Now, it is very necessary that we should not flinch from seeing what is vile and debasing. There is filth on the floor and it must be scraped up with the muck-rake; and there are times and places where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed. . . .”

—Washington, D.C., April 14, 1906

By the early 1900s, American publishers were competing to see who could expose the most corruption and scandal. A group of aggressive 10¢ and 15¢

magazines grew in popularity at this time, including *McClure's*, *Collier's*, and *Munsey's*.

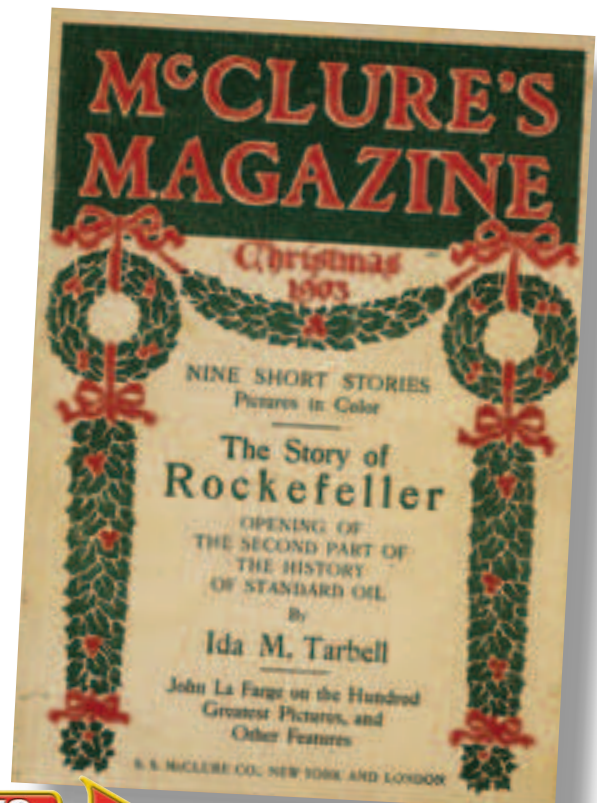
Muckrakers uncovered corruption in many areas. Some concentrated on exposing what they considered to be the unfair practices of large American corporations. In *McClure's*, for example, **Ida Tarbell** published a series of articles critical of the Standard Oil Company. In *Everybody's Magazine*, Charles Edward Russell attacked the beef industry.

Other muckrakers targeted government. David Graham Philips described how money influenced the Senate, while **Lincoln Steffens**, another *McClure's* reporter, reported on vote stealing and other corrupt practices of urban political machines. These were later collected into a book, *The Shame of the Cities*.

Still other muckrakers concentrated on social problems. In his influential book *How the Other Half Lives*, published in 1890, **Jacob Riis** described the poverty, disease, and crime that afflicted many immigrant neighborhoods in New York City. The

Picturing History

Muckrakers *McClure's* published Ida Tarbell's exposé on Standard Oil. What issues particularly concerned the muckrakers?



CONTENTS



muckrakers' articles led to a general public debate on social and economic problems and put pressure on politicians to introduce reforms.

✓ Reading Check Describing How did the muckrakers help spark the Progressive movement?

Making Government Efficient

There were many different types of progressivism. Different causes led to different approaches, and progressives even took opposing positions on how to solve some problems.

One group of progressives focused on making government more efficient. They believed that many problems in society could be solved if government worked properly. Efficiency progressives took their ideas from business. These progressives believed business had become more efficient by applying the principles of scientific management.

The ideas of scientific management had been developed in the late 1800s and were popularized by Frederick W. Taylor in his book *The Principles of Scientific Management*, published in 1911. Taylor

described how a company could become more efficient by managing time, breaking tasks down into small parts, and using standardized tools.

Efficiency progressives argued that managing a modern city required experts, not politicians. They did not want more democracy in government, for they believed that the democratic process led to compromise and corruption. In most American cities, the mayor or city council chose the heads of city departments. Traditionally, these jobs went to political supporters and friends, who often knew little about city services.

Efficiency progressives wanted either a commission plan or a council-manager system. Under the **commission plan**, a city's government would be divided into several departments, which would each be placed under the control of an expert commissioner. These progressives argued that a board of commissioners or a city manager with expertise in city services should hire the specialists to run city departments. Galveston, Texas, adopted the commission system in 1901. Other cities soon followed.

✓ Reading Check Explaining Why did progressives want to reorganize city government?

A City and a Storm

On September 8, 1900, a massive hurricane devastated the city of Galveston, Texas. About 6,000 people died. When the political machine that controlled the city government proved incapable of responding to the disaster, local business leaders convinced the state to let them take control. In April 1901, Galveston introduced the commission system of government. Under this system, Galveston chose five commissioners to replace the mayor and city council.

Four commissioners were local business leaders. When the city quickly recovered, reformers in other cities were impressed. Galveston's experience seemed to prove the benefits of running a city like a business by dividing its government into departments and placing each under an expert commissioner. Many other cities soon followed, adopting either the commission plan or the council-manager system.





Democracy and Progressivism

Not all progressives agreed with the efficiency progressives. Many believed that society needed more democracy, not less. They wanted to make elected officials more responsive to voters.

“Laboratory of Democracy” Political reform first came to the state level when Wisconsin voters elected Republican **Robert La Follette** to be governor. La Follette used his office to attack the way political parties ran their conventions. Because party bosses controlled the selection of convention delegates, they also controlled which candidates were chosen to run for office. La Follette pressured the state legislature to require each party to hold a **direct primary**, in which all party members could vote for a candidate to run in the general election.

La Follette’s great reform success gave Wisconsin a reputation as the “laboratory of democracy.” La

Follette claimed, “Democracy is based upon knowledge. . . . The only way to beat the boss . . . is to keep the people thoroughly informed.”

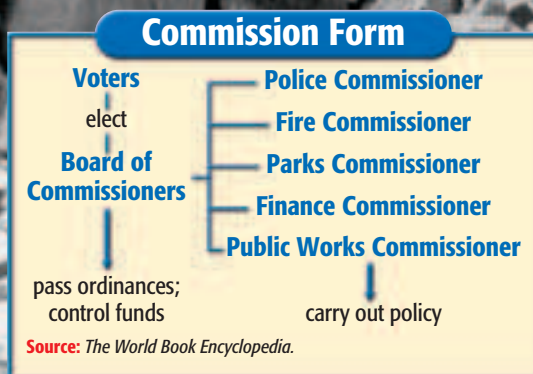
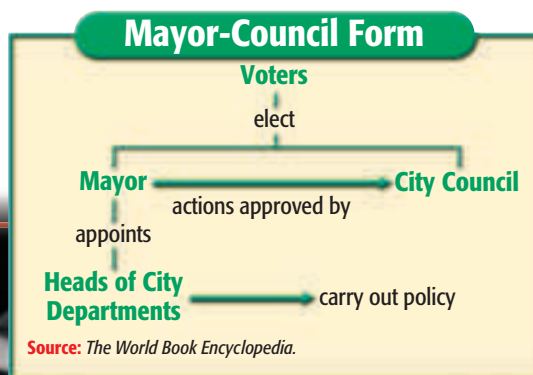
Inspired by La Follette, progressives in other states pushed for similar electoral changes. To force state legislators to respond to voters, three new reforms were introduced in many states. The **initiative** allowed a group of citizens to introduce legislation and required the legislature to vote on it. The **referendum** allowed proposed legislation to be submitted to the voters for approval. The **recall** allowed voters to demand a special election to remove an elected official from office before his or her term had expired.

GOVERNMENT

Direct Election of Senators Another reform the progressives favored affected the federal government—the direct election of senators. As originally written, the United States Constitution directed each state legislature to elect two senators from that state. Political machines or large trusts often influenced the election of senators, who then repaid their supporters with federal contracts and jobs. By the early 1900s, muckraker Charles Edward Russell charged that the Senate had become “only a chamber of butlers for industrialists and financiers.”

To counter Senate corruption, progressives called for the direct election of senators by all state voters. In 1912 Congress passed a direct-election amendment. Although the direct election of senators was intended to end corruption, it also removed one of the state legislatures’ checks on federal power. In 1913 the amendment was ratified, becoming the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution.

✓ Reading Check Evaluating What was the impact of the Seventeenth Amendment? What problem was it intended to solve?



The Suffrage Movement

In July 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the first women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. Stanton convinced the delegates that their first priority should be getting women the right to vote. The movement for women’s voting rights became known as the suffrage movement. **Suffrage** is the right to vote.

Woman suffrage was an important issue for progressives. Although the suffrage movement began well before progressivism emerged, many progressives joined the movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s.





Early Problems The suffrage movement got off to a slow start. Women suffragists were accused of being unfeminine and immoral. Several were physically attacked. The movement also remained weak because many of its supporters were abolitionists as well. In the years before the Civil War, they preferred to concentrate on abolishing slavery.

After the Civil War, the Republicans in Congress introduced the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution to protect the voting rights of African Americans. Several leaders of the woman suffrage movement had wanted these amendments worded to give women the right to vote as well. They were bitterly disappointed when Republicans refused.

The debate over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments split the suffrage movement into two groups: the National Woman Suffrage Association, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and the American Woman Suffrage Association, led by Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe. The first group

wanted to focus on passing a constitutional amendment allowing woman suffrage. The second group believed that the best strategy was to convince state governments to give women the right to vote before trying to amend the Constitution.

This split reduced the movement's effectiveness. In 1878 a constitutional amendment granting woman suffrage was introduced in Congress, but it failed to pass. Few state governments granted women the right to vote either. By 1900 only Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado had granted women full voting rights.

The Movement Builds Support In 1890 the two groups united to form the **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)**. The movement still did not make significant gains, however, until about 1910. Part of the problem was convincing women to become politically active. As the Progressive movement began, however, many middle-class women concluded that they needed the vote to promote social reforms they favored. Many working-class women also wanted the vote to ensure passage of labor laws protecting women.

As the suffrage movement grew, members began lobbying lawmakers, organizing marches, and delivering speeches on street corners. By the end of 1912, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Kansas had granted women full voting rights. On March 3, 1913, the day before President Wilson's inauguration, suffragists marched in Washington, D.C., to draw attention to their cause.

Alice Paul, a Quaker social worker who headed NAWSA's congressional committee, had organized the Washington march. Paul wanted to use protests to force President Wilson to take action on suffrage. Her activities alarmed other members of NAWSA who wanted to negotiate with Wilson. Paul left NAWSA and formed the National Woman's Party. Her supporters picketed the White House, blocked sidewalks, chained themselves to lampposts, and went on hunger strikes if arrested.

In 1915 **Carrie Chapman Catt** became NAWSA's leader. Catt developed what she called her "Winning Plan" to mobilize the suffrage

Profiles IN HISTORY

Susan B. Anthony

1820–1906

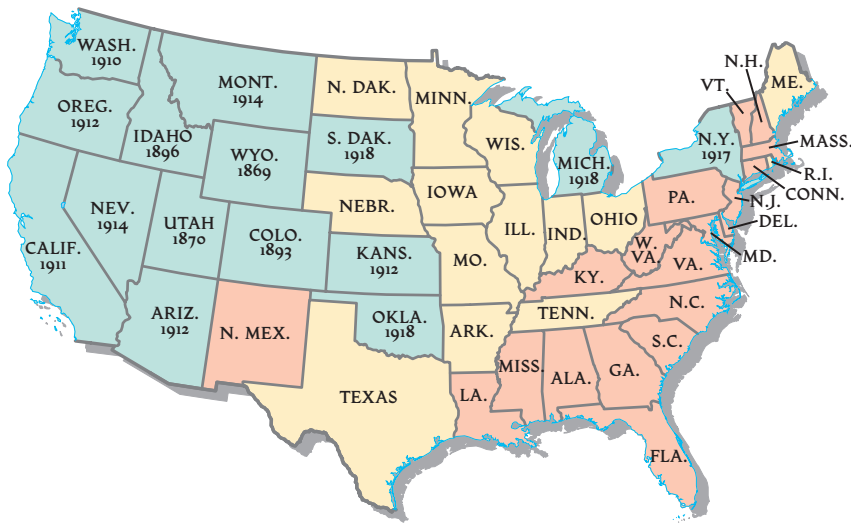
Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams, Massachusetts, to Quaker parents. Quakers were generally more supportive of women's rights than some other groups, and so Anthony was able to receive a good education. She finished her schooling at the age of 17. Anthony then worked as a teacher in New York, but she was fired after protesting that her pay was one-fifth the amount of her male colleagues. She found another job, however, as a principal at New York's Canajoharie Academy. Between 1848 and 1863, Anthony was involved in both the temperance and abolitionist movements.

Her involvement in the drive for women's equality began in 1851 after she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Between 1854 and 1860, the duo attempted to change discriminatory laws in New York. In 1869 Anthony and Stanton organized the National Woman Suffrage Association and began promoting an amendment to grant woman suffrage. Anthony and 12 other women illegally cast votes in the presidential election of 1872. They were arrested and convicted, but the judge feared that



the jury would rule in Anthony's favor. He dismissed the jury and fined Anthony instead. She refused to pay the \$100 fine, but the judge decided to let her go, afraid that appealing the case might generate sympathy for the suffrage movement.

In 1883 Anthony traveled to Europe, and she helped form the International Council of Women in 1888. This organization represented the rights of women in 48 countries. She died in Rochester, New York, in 1906. Though Anthony did not live to see her dream of woman suffrage become reality, the United States government honored her by placing her portrait on a new dollar coin in 1979.



■ Full woman suffrage before 1920, with date granted
■ Partial woman suffrage before 1920
■ No woman suffrage until ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment
 1920 border



Geography Skills

- Interpreting Maps** Which region led the way in granting woman suffrage?
- Applying Geography Skills** Based on the map, what region would you suggest had the least amount of campaigning for woman suffrage?

movement nation-wide in one final push to gain voting rights. She also threw NAWSA's support behind Wilson in the 1916 election. Although Wilson did not endorse a woman suffrage amendment, he supported the Democratic Party's call for states to give women the vote.

The Nineteenth Amendment As more states granted women the right to vote, Congress began to favor a constitutional amendment. In 1918 the House of Representatives passed a woman suffrage amendment. Wilson then addressed the Senate, asking it to vote for the amendment. Despite his efforts, the amendment failed to pass by two votes.

During the midterm elections of 1918, Catt used NAWSA's resources to defeat two anti-suffrage senators. The following year, in June 1919, the Senate finally passed the Nineteenth Amendment by just more than the two-thirds vote needed. On August 26, 1920, after three-fourths of the states had voted to ratify it, the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote went into effect.

Reading Check Evaluating How successful were women in lobbying to achieve passage of the Nineteenth Amendment?

Social Welfare Progressivism

While many progressives focused on reforming the political system, others focused on social problems, such as crime, illiteracy, alcohol abuse, child labor, and the health and safety of Americans. These social welfare progressives created charities to help the poor and disadvantaged. They also pushed for new laws they hoped would fix social problems.

The Campaign Against Child Labor Probably the most emotional Progressive issue was the campaign against child labor. Children had always worked on family farms, but the factory work that many children performed was monotonous, and the conditions were often unhealthy. In 1900 over 1.7 million children under the age of 16 worked outside the home. Reformers established a National Child Labor Committee in 1904 to work to abolish child labor.

Muckraker John Spargo's 1906 book *The Bitter Cry of the Children* presented detailed evidence on child labor conditions. He told of coal mines where thousands of "breaker boys" were hired at age 9 or 10 to pick slag out of coal and were paid 60¢ for a 10-hour



**NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC**

MOMENT in HISTORY

YOUTHFUL PROTEST

Two young immigrants march in a New York City demonstration against child labor practices in 1907. Both young women wear banners proclaiming the same message—one in English, the other in Yiddish. Such protests helped publicize the exploitation of children in dingy, dangerous “sweatshops” in American cities. At the dawn of the twentieth century, more than a million children—some as young as eight—labored long hours in factories. The weight of popular opinion finally forced state governments to pass laws protecting young workers.



day. He described how the work bent their backs permanently and often crippled their hands. Reports like these convinced states to pass laws that set a minimum age for employment and established other limits on child labor, such as maximum hours children could work. At the same time, many states began passing compulsory education laws, requiring young children to be in school instead of at work.

By the early 1900s, the number of child laborers had begun to decline. For many families, the new wealth generated by industry enabled them to survive without having their children work. For others, the child labor and compulsory education laws meant that wives had to work instead.

Health and Safety Codes Many adult workers also labored in difficult conditions. Factories, coal mines, and railroads were particularly dangerous. For example, in 1911 a terrible fire swept through Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City. Nearly 150 women workers died, trapped by doors locked from the outside. Outrage at the deaths caused New York

City to pass strict building codes dealing with fire hazards and unsafe machinery and working conditions.

During the early 1900s, thousands of people died or were injured on the job, but they and their families received little compensation. Progressives joined union leaders to pressure states for workers' compensation laws. These laws established insurance funds financed by employers. Workers injured in industrial accidents received payments from the funds.

Some progressives also favored zoning laws as a method of protecting the public. These laws divided a town or city into zones for commercial, residential, or other development, thereby regulating how land and buildings could be used. Building codes set minimum standards for light, air, room size, and sanitation, and required buildings to have fire escapes. Health codes required restaurants and other facilities to maintain clean environments for their patrons.

The Prohibition Movement Many progressives believed alcohol was responsible for many problems in American life. Settlement house workers hated the





effects of drinking on families. Scarce wages were spent on alcohol, and drinking sometimes led to physical abuse and sickness. Many Christians also opposed alcohol.

Some employers believed drinking hurt workers' efficiency, while political reformers viewed the saloon as the informal headquarters of the machine politics they opposed. The **temperance** movement, which advocated the moderation or elimination of alcohol, emerged from these concerns.

For the most part, women led the temperance movement. In 1874 a group of women formed the **Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)**. By 1911 the WCTU had nearly 250,000 members. In 1893 another organization—the Anti-Saloon League—was formed. At first the temperance movement worked to reduce alcohol consumption. Later it pressed for **prohibition**—laws banning the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol.

Reading Check **Examining** What actions did progressives take to deal with the issue of child labor?

Progressives Versus Big Business

A fourth group of progressives focused their efforts on regulating big business. Many progressives believed that wealth was concentrated in the hands of too few people. In particular, many became concerned about trusts and holding companies—giant corporations that dominated many industries.

Progressives disagreed, however, over how to regulate big business. Some believed government should break up big companies to restore competition. This idea led to the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890. Others argued that big business was the most efficient way to organize the economy. They pushed instead for the creation of government agencies to regulate big companies and prevent them from abusing their power. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), created in 1887, was an early example of this kind of Progressive thinking.

Some progressives went even further and advocated **socialism**—the idea that the government should own and operate industry for the community as a whole. They wanted the government to buy up large companies, especially industries that affected everyone, such as railroads and utilities.

At its peak, socialism had some national support. **Eugene Debs**, the former American Railway Union leader, won nearly a million votes as the American Socialist Party candidate for president in 1912. Most progressives and most Americans, however, believed in the superiority of the American system of free enterprise.

Efforts to regulate business were focused at the national level. Congress passed a number of proposals to regulate the economy under presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, and Woodrow Wilson.

Reading Check **Evaluating** What was the impact of Eugene Debs and the Socialist Party on the 1912 election?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

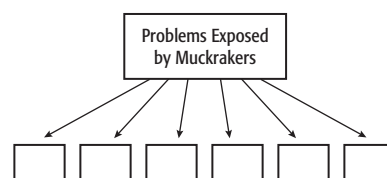
- Define:** **progressivism, muckraker, commission plan, direct primary, initiative, referendum, recall, suffrage, temperance, prohibition, socialism.**
- Identify:** Jacob Riis, Robert La Follette, Alice Paul.
- State** what was provided for by the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Reviewing Themes

- Government and Democracy** How did initiative, referendum, and recall change democracy in the United States?

Critical Thinking

- Evaluating** What impact did Susan B. Anthony have on Progressive era reforms?
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the kinds of problems that muckrakers exposed.



Analyzing Visuals

- Examining Charts** Study the charts on page 549. Under which system do voters seem to have the most control over department heads? Why do you think so?

Writing About History

- Persuasive Writing** Some women in the early 1900s suggested that the Constitution needed an equal rights amendment. Imagine you are living then. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper supporting or opposing such an amendment.