



“How can people in other countries who are trying to grasp our plan of democracy avoid stumbling over our logic when we deny the first steps in democracy to our women?”

Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress, from her address to the House of Representatives on January 10, 1918 urging passage of the 19th Amendment

On April 2, 1917, Jeannette Rankin’s first day in the House of Representatives, she took part in a Joint Session of Congress to hear President Woodrow Wilson ask to “make the world safe for democracy” by declaring war on Germany. Following debates on the war resolution, Rankin voted no in keeping with her personal anti-war beliefs. Fellow suffragists felt this hurt their own cause.

Less than a year later, after helping to organize the 1918 House vote for a suffrage amendment, Rankin was among those to address her colleagues before they narrowly passed the measure by the necessary two-thirds majority, 274-136. Despite acceptance in the House, the bill failed to pass in the Senate.

Jeannette Rankin believed in women’s suffrage and opposed war as a way to solve a global conflict.

Look through the news, in print or online, for articles about women serving their communities in political positions at the local, state and national level. What causes do these women support or oppose?

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