

**18.2**

# **The Women's Rights Movement**



## **As a Young Historian, I will be able to...**

- **Analyze why a movement to expand women's political rights arose in the 1960s.**
- **Identify the goals and methods that political organizations used to promote women's rights.**
- **Assess the impact of the women's movement on American society.**

# A New Feminist Movement

**Feminism-** The theory of political, social, & economic equality of men & women

**Feminism movements in the United States go back as far as the 1940s with the Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls, NY**

**Second wave feminism had women fighting for the right to vote in the 1920s**

**The 1950s society portrayed women as housewives & a personification of “the good life”**

# Traditional Roles?

Many saw similarities with women's rights & the civil rights movement

Casey Hayden & Mary King (Civil Rights activists) emphasized the idea of “Jane Crow” as a link between racial & gender discrimination

Betty Friedan wrote her book *The Feminine Mystique* to redefine how women were viewed in society

She argued against the housewife stereotype & believed women should have access to the same opportunities as men.



# **Workplace Discrimination**

**Women in the workforce multiplied in the 1950s & 1960s, but women were often placed in “dead-end jobs”**

**If a woman became pregnant, she would often be dismissed from work, take unpaid leave, or be demoted.**

**Women who had similar education & degrees as men were often overshadowed & denied jobs**



# Women's Civil Rights

**The National Organization for Women (*NOW*)-** Organization to win true equality for women. Co-founded by Betty Freidan

*NOW* was formed to help enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964, part of the act outlawed sex discrimination in employment

The organization would speak out against stereotypes of women in the media & called for more balance in marriages

**The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)-** Amendment that would guarantee gender equality under the law

Some women saw *NOW* as too extreme, others argued it wasn't extreme enough

# Methods of the Movement

***NOW* also fought for reproductive rights, especially the right for an abortion, using legislation & working in the political systems**

**Some women would protest, rather than seek legislation, & sought to show society how women were trapped**

**Gloria Steinem** tried to change awareness through mass media & became a writer.

**In 1963, she went undercover as a *Playboy* bunny to reveal the humiliation women had to endure**

**In 1972 she co-founded the magazine *Ms.* To help promote feminism**



# Opposition

**Some Americans, both men & women, challenged the movement**

**Phyllis Schlafly** became a conservative political activist who challenged feminism as an attack on “family, marriage, & children.”

**She fought against the ERA as an act that would desegregate bathrooms, force women into the military, & hurt family units**

**Conservative opposition caused the ERA to fail as a constitutional amendment**



# \*\*\*Impact of the Movement

**Women's rights were greatly expanded, but feminism issues still divide Americans today**

**Title VII-** Clause in the Civil Rights Act that outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex

**The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was created to enforce the federal prohibition on job discrimination**

**Title IX-** Banned discrimination in education on the basis of sex

# \*\*\*Impact of the Movement

The Equal Credit Opportunity Act made it illegal to deny credit to a women because of her gender

1973- The Supreme Court ruled in favor of *Roe V. Wade* which allowed women the right to an abortion

Women in the workforce doubled since the 1950s  
& new job opportunities were opened

However, women still make more than the average man, the majority of the nation's poor are single women, especially single mothers