

Leslie Woman Suffrage Commission, Inc.

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CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT, PRESIDENT

BUREAU OF SUFFRAGE EDUCATION

ROSE YOUNG, DIRECTOR

Department of Editorial Correspondence

MRS. IDA HUSTED HARPER, CHAIRMAN

TELEPHONE 4818 MURRAY HILL

171 Madison Avenue

New York, June 6, 1918



Dear Sir:

The opponents of the submission of a Federal Amendment for Woman Suffrage insist that the franchise must be granted by the States. The enclosed leaflet has been carefully prepared from a thorough examination of the State constitutions. May we hope that you will take the time to read it?

Very truly yours,

Ida Husted Harper,

Editorial Chairman Leslie Suffrage Bureau.

STATE CONSTITUTIONS VERY DIFFICULT TO AMEND

SUPPORT THE FEDERAL SUFFRAGE AMENDMENT

ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE STATES

In NEW MEXICO during the first 25 years of Statehood the adoption of a State constitutional amendment for woman suffrage requires a majority of three-fourths of all who vote on any question or candidate at the election when it is submitted, and there must be two-thirds of these in each county, a provision which is absolutely prohibitive. The constitution of INDIANA says: "If a majority of the electors of the State shall vote to ratify an amendment it shall become a part of the constitution," although it would require a census of male citizens to determine the number of electors. The constitution made in 1851 has never been amended. Only one amendment at a time can be submitted in ILLINOIS, and to be adopted must receive a majority of the highest number of votes cast at the election. This offers small chance for woman suffrage. In SOUTH CAROLINA, after an amendment has been submitted by a two-thirds vote of two Legislatures and has received a majority of as many votes as were cast for Representatives in the Legislature, this body at its next session may nullify the election. This is the case in MISSISSIPPI after an amendment has received a majority of the highest number of votes cast at the election. Woman suffrage by State action in South Carolina and Mississippi is practically impossible.

BY CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

In New Hampshire the Legislature cannot submit an amendment to the voters, but this can be done only by a constitutional convention which meets once in seven years. In Vermont there can be a constitutional convention but once in ten years. In many States the calling of such a convention is very difficult and complete woman suffrage never has been granted anywhere through the submission of an amendment

by a constitutional convention.

LARGE LEGISLATIVE MAJORITY REQUIRED

In many States a two-thirds or three-fifths majority of the Legislature is necessary to submit an amendment to the voters. These are Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont and West Virginia (20). In a number of States two successive Legislatures must vote to submit an amendment. These are Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin (11). In all of these States except Massachusetts and New Jersey the Legislature meets biennially, thus requiring at least three years to have an amendment sent to the voters. The Alabama Legislature meets only once in four years. An amendment cannot be resubmitted in Illinois for four years; in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Kentucky for five years; in Tennessee for six years.

LARGE MAJORITY OF POPULAR VOTE NECESSARY

Rhode Island requires a three-fifths majority and New Hampshire a two-thirds majority of the votes cast on an amendment for its adoption.

The following States require a majority of the largest number of votes cast at the election, not simply on the amendment: Arkansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma. South Carolina and Tennessee require a majority of the highest number of votes cast for Representatives in the Legislature. Thus in all of these States the ballots not marked for or against an amendment are counted as opposed. The requirements in Indiana and New Mexico are cited above. In these twelve States it is almost impossible to amend the constitution.

A study of the above facts should convince all fairminded persons of the great difficulty and long delay of obtaining woman suffrage by individual action of the States. When added to these are the vast expense and the time and work required from thousands of women, the advantage of a Federal Amendment, with the comparatively easy and speedy process of gaining it by consent of three-fourths of the State Legislatures, should need no argument in its favor.

SUPPORT THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.