



Introduced Version

**HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. _____**

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED RESOLUTION

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION recognizing the roles played by May Wright Sewall, Zerelda Wallace, and Helen Gougar in the Indiana women's suffrage movement.

Lawson L

_____, read first time and referred to Committee on

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION recognizing the roles played by May Wright Sewall, Zerelda Wallace, and Helen Gougar in the Indiana women's suffrage movement.

Whereas, The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy;

Whereas, The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920 during the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association;

Whereas, As the 100th anniversary of the organization approaches in 2020, special recognition is due to three women who played key roles in the suffrage movement in Indiana — May Wright Sewall, Zerelda Wallace, and Helen Gougar;

Whereas, May Wright Sewall was born on May 27, 1844, in Greenfield, Wisconsin, and died on July 23, 1920, before getting the right to vote in Indiana;

Whereas, Although she was most well known for the role she played in the women's suffrage movement, May Wright Sewall was an important educator and a leader in the area of civic improvement and peacemaking;

Whereas, After graduating from Northwestern Female



College in 1866 and earning an M.A. degree in 1871, May Wright Sewall taught school in Corinth, Mississippi, was the principal of the high school in Plainwell, Michigan, and was a teacher at a high school in Indianapolis;

Whereas, Along with her second husband, Theodore L. Sewall, May founded the Girls' Classical School of Indianapolis in 1882;

Whereas, During this time May had helped establish the Indianapolis Equal Suffrage Society, led a campaign that narrowly failed to secure women's suffrage in Indiana, and was chairman of the executive committee of the National Woman Suffrage Association;

Whereas, May Wright Sewall held many positions during her career including the first recording secretary and president of the National Council of Women, president of the International Council of Women, and first vice president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs;

Whereas, Zerelda Wallace was born on August 6, 1817, in Kentucky and came to Indianapolis with her family in the early 1830s;

Whereas, Zerelda was active in the temperance movement, was instrumental in the founding of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and served as the organization's first Indiana state president and national vice president;

Whereas, Zerelda campaigned for women's suffrage with the same vigor as she had in the temperance movement, serving as president of the Equal Suffrage Society of Indianapolis, was a founder of the Indiana Woman's Suffrage Association, and was elected vice president of the National Woman Suffrage Association;

Whereas, A contemporary of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Zerelda was known as a powerful speaker for both the temperance and women's suffrage movements and was in constant demand, addressing gatherings across the nation;



Whereas, Zerelda testified before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee on women's right to vote, addressed the 1883 International Council of Women held in Washington, D.C., on "The Moral Power of the Ballot", and was a featured speaker at the conventions of the National Woman Suffrage Association;

Whereas, Zerelda was elected posthumously to the Indiana Academy and was also selected to represent Indiana in the League of Women Voters National Hall of Fame;

Whereas, In recognition of her outstanding accomplishments, an Indiana State Historic Marker was dedicated to Zerelda Wallace at the Central Christian Church in Indianapolis;

Whereas, In addition to her work with the women's suffrage movement, Zerelda was the wife of Governor David Wallace, the sixth governor of Indiana, and the stepmother of Lew Wallace;

Whereas, Helen Gougar was born on July 18, 1843, near Litchfield, Michigan;

Whereas, Helen accepted a teaching position in Lafayette, where she met and married John Gougar, a young attorney;

Whereas, As a young wife, Helen was involved in several benevolent organizations in Lafayette, including the YMCA, Lafayette Home Association, Ladies' Benevolent Society, and the Second Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, In April 1878, Helen addressed a Blue Ribbon Temperance Rally in Lafayette and persuaded 500 attendees to sign a temperance pledge, a speech marking the beginning of Helen's commitment to the temperance movement and, through this work, to becoming an ardent suffragist;

Whereas, Helen ventured into the newspaper business when she became the editor of "Our Temperance Herald", renaming it "Our Herald";

Whereas, Helen traveled to Kansas and spearheaded the



drafting of a municipal suffrage bill, uniting the local Women's Christian Temperance Union with the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association, a bill that passed in 1887;

Whereas, In 1888 when the state and national Republican party refused to include suffrage and temperance in the party platform, Helen left the Republican Party and became a member of the Prohibition Party, becoming a delegate to the Prohibition Party National Convention in 1892;

Whereas, It was this party involvement that put Helen at odds with her suffragist comrades, including Susan B. Anthony;

Whereas, Helen sued the Tippecanoe County election board for its refusal to allow her to vote in the 1894 election and was able to argue her own case before the Supreme Court (she was admitted to the bar in 1895) due to the experience she gained helping her husband;

Whereas, Helen Gougar died in 1907 without getting the right to vote;

Whereas, In recognition of her outstanding accomplishments, an Indiana State Historic Marker was dedicated to Helen Gougar in Lafayette; and

Whereas, These three great women continue to be an example and inspiration for all Hoosiers: Therefore,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives
of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana,
the Senate concurring:*

1 SECTION 1. That the Indiana General Assembly recognizes the
2 many accomplishments of these three outstanding women in the
3 suffrage movement in Indiana and nationally.

4 SECTION 2. That the Principal Clerk of the House of
5 Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to the League of
6 Women Voters.

