The Territory of Wyoming passes the first law in the nation giving women over age 21 the right to vote. After joining the Union in 1890, Wyoming becomes the first state to permit women the right to vote in all elections, although in 1887, Kansas allowed women to vote in municipal elections.

About 300 activists gather in Seneca Falls, N.Y., to strategize on how to achieve women’s suffrage nationwide. Participants, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, sign the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, modeled on the Declaration of Independence, which calls for equal treatment of women and men under the law and voting rights for women.

Disagreements over the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments and the relationship between women’s suffrage and the movement for racial equality divide the women’s rights movement between two organizations: the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association. The rivals will merge in 1890 to form the National American Women’s Suffrage Association.

The National Labor Union, one of the nation’s first organized labor advocacy groups, pushes for equal pay for equal work, the concept that a woman must be paid the same as a man for doing the same or equivalent job with the same qualifications.

A federal law that grants female federal employees equal pay for equal work is enacted. This right was not extended to the majority of female employees who work for private companies or state and local governments until the adoption of the Equal Pay Act in 1963.
The Supreme Court decides in *Minor v. Happersett* that a Missouri law limiting the right to vote to male citizens is constitutional. The Court rejects the claim by Virginia Minor that the state law deprives her of one of the “privileges or immunities” of citizenship in violation of the 14th Amendment. While women are “persons” under the 14th Amendment, the Court says, they are a special category of “non-voting” citizens, and states may grant or deny them the right to vote.

The 19th Amendment is ratified. Seventy-two years after the Seneca Falls Convention, the 19th Amendment, which gives women the right to vote, is ratified. Only one person who had signed the convention’s Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Charlotte Woodward, is alive and able to exercise her right to vote. The amendment reads: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

Leaders of more than 100 African American women’s clubs unite to form an organization to promote equality for women, raise funds for projects that benefit women and children and oppose segregation and racial violence. In 1935, Mary McLeod Bethune will organize the National Council of Negro Women, a coalition of black women’s groups that lobbies against job discrimination, racism and sexism.

This national labor group is created to unionize working women and advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women. Its leaders will go on to form the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union.
After ratification of the 19th Amendment, the League of Women Voters is founded to educate women about their right to vote and encourage them to exercise it. Today, the league promotes greater participation in the democratic process and advocates on a wide range of public policy issues.

Alice Paul and the National Woman’s Party succeed in having a constitutional amendment introduced in Congress that says: “Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.” In 1943, it is revised to what is known today as the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA was sent to the states for ratification in 1972 with a seven-year deadline and quickly won 22 of the necessary 38 ratifications. But the pace slowed as opposition began to organize. Although Congress granted an extension until June 30, 1982, the ERA fell short. It was reintroduced in Congress on July 14, 1982, and has been introduced before every session of Congress since.

First proposed 20 years earlier, the law says employers must give equal pay for men and women performing the same job duties regardless of the race, color, religion, national origin or sex of the worker.

Title VII bars employment discrimination by private employers, employment agencies and unions based on race, sex, and other grounds. To enforce the law, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is created. In 1980, the commission will issue guidelines that define sexual harassment as illegal sex-based discrimination under Title VII.

In *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the Supreme Court legalizes the use of contraceptives by married couples — five years after oral contraceptives became available to American women. The ruling will be extended to single women in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972). Margaret Sanger, a feminist and family planning activist, advocated legalization of contraceptives in 1914.
The passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in 1978 made it illegal for employers to discriminate against women based on their plans to have children.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act ensures that employment discrimination on account of pregnancy is treated as unlawful sex-based discrimination. As a result, employers cannot question potential hires about their plans to have children and have to extend benefits equally.

The federal law expands workers’ right to sue for pay discrimination and relaxes the statute of limitations on such suits. Ledbetter had sued her employer, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., when she neared retirement and learned that she was paid much less than her male colleagues. But the Supreme Court threw out her case, saying she should have filed her suit within 180 days of the date that Goodyear first paid her less than her peers. Courts repeatedly had cited the decision as a reason for rejecting lawsuits claiming discrimination based on race, sex, age and disability. The new law changes Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which said discrimination complaints must be brought within 180 days of the discriminatory act.