

## 1848

At Seneca Falls, New York, 300 women and men sign the Declaration of Sentiments, a plea for the end of discrimination against women. The first women's rights convention in the United States, the meeting launched the battle for women's suffrage. It was seven decades later that women earned the right to vote.



**1916**

Jeanette Rankin, Republican of Montana, became the first female elected to the House of Representatives. "I may be the first woman member of Congress," Rankin said after her election. "But I won't be the last." She wasn't.



## 1918

Margaret Sanger, two years after opening a birth control clinic in Brooklyn, wins her suit in New York to allow doctors to advise their married patients about birth control for health purposes. The sixth of 11 children, Sanger was a sex educator, writer and nurse. The clinic she founded, along with others, becomes Planned Parenthood in 1942.



## 1920

The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution is ratified, ensuring women the right to vote. Southern state opposition threatened to defeat the ratification. But a 23-year-old Tennessee state legislator, Harry T. Burn, under pressure from his mother, cast the tie-breaking vote to add Tennessee to states ratifying the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, ensuring its inclusion in the constitution.



## 1963

The Equal Pay Act is passed by Congress, promising equitable wages for the same work, regardless of the race, color, religion, national origin or sex of the worker. That year, women earned, on average, 59 cents for every dollar earned by men. By 2017, the gap had narrowed, with women making an average 80 cents on the male-earned dollar.



# 1965

The Supreme Court establishes the right of married couples to use contraception. The ruling in *Griswold v. Connecticut* invalidated an 1879 Connecticut law imposing a minimum \$40 fine and 60 days in jail for people who used medicines or devices to prevent pregnancy. The high court said the ban violated the right to marital privacy – an argument that paved the way for the landmark *Roe v. Wade* 1973 ruling that states cannot criminalize all abortions.



## 1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments prohibits sex discrimination in all aspects of education programs that receive federal support. The rule is seen as a game-changer for female athletes who want to participate in school sports. It also is credited with expanding female access to higher education: while some colleges and universities before the 1970s refused to admit women, there were, in 2017, more women than men enrolled in college.



## 1973

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Roe v. Wade*, vastly expanded a woman's right to an abortion, saying a Texas law allowing abortion only to save the life of the pregnant female violated a woman's right to privacy. The court said abortion was allowable in the first trimester, but gave states some latitude in limiting abortion in the second and third trimesters. Subsequently, some states have imposed restrictions on abortion, with approval from the Supreme Court.





## 1981

Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court. The appointment by President Ronald Reagan was a breakthrough for women and for O'Connor herself. A Stanford Law School graduate, O'Connor struggled to find work, eventually working for free for the county attorney in San Mateo, California instead of accepting a paid position as a legal secretary. After proving herself, she became a deputy county attorney, launching her legal career.



## 1984

Geraldine Ferraro becomes the first woman to be nominated to be vice president on a major party ticket. The Democratic ticket of Walter Mondale and Ferraro lost to Republican Ronald Reagan and his running-mate, George H.W. Bush. Ferraro had not taken her husband's surname, and The New York Times – which referred to women only as Mrs. or Miss – called her “Mrs. Ferraro.” In 1986, the Times began to use the more neutral “Ms.



## 1992

The Year of the Woman: Following 1991 hearings in which lawyer Anita Hill accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment, record numbers of women are elected to Congress, with four women winning Senate elections and two dozen women elected to first terms in the House. The election also marked an extraordinary era of achievement for minority women: 47 of the 58 African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-Pacific-American women who have served in Congress were elected between 1992 and 2016.



## 1994

The Violence Against Women Act funds services for victims of rape and domestic violence and allows women to seek civil rights remedies for gender-related crimes. Six years later, the Supreme Court invalidates those portions of the law permitting victims of rape, domestic violence, etc. to sue their attackers in federal court. VAWA was reauthorized in September 2018 for a few months as part of a stopgap spending measure, but its future is uncertain.



## 1997

Nancy Pelosi becomes the first female speaker of the House. A Baltimore native who has served as a California congresswoman since 1987, Pelosi in 2002 rose to be the House Democratic leader, becoming the first woman to do so. Elected speaker after the Democrats took control of the chamber in 2006, Pelosi, regarded as a tenacious vote-counter, shepherded the House passage of President Obama's signature initiative, the Affordable Care Act.



## 2008

Alaska Governor Sarah Palin becomes the first woman to run for vice president on the Republican ticket. Hillary Clinton loses the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama. Palin delighted GOP conservatives but worried moderates concerned about whether she was prepared to take over if Republican nominee Sen. John McCain could not serve. Clinton, a former First Lady and U.S. Senator, lost the Democratic primary to the less-experienced Obama, who made her secretary of State after he won the presidency.



## 2009

The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act allows victims, usually women, of pay discrimination to file a complaint with the government against their employer within 180 days of their last paycheck. Three years later, in 2012, the Paycheck Fairness Act, meant to fight gender discrimination in the workplace, fails in the Senate on a party-line vote. Two years later, Republicans filibuster the Paycheck Fairness Act (twice)



## 2013

The ban against women in military combat positions is removed, overturning a 1994 Pentagon decision restricting women from combat roles. Since then, women have gained a small but important share of combat roles. The roles propelled women to political power as well: by 2016, four female combat veterans were serving in Congress, and at least two more women who had served in combat were elected to the House in November, 2018.





## 2016

Hillary Rodham Clinton secures the Democratic presidential nomination, becoming the first U.S. woman to lead the ticket of a major party. She loses to Republican Donald Trump in the fall. Clinton stays active in public life, publishing a memoir, "What Happened," and offering her views on everything from the movement to counter sexual harassment to Trump's performance as president.



## 2017

Millions of women around the world hold marches on Jan. 22 to demand equal treatment and justice on issues ranging from equal pay to sexual harassment. The marches were timed to come on President Trump's first full day in office. Later in the year, the #MeToo movement is born. After Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein was dismissed from his job after multiple sexual harassment and assault allegations were made against him, women all over the world posted their tales of harassment on Twitter, with the hashtag "MeToo." The movement led to investigations of powerful men in media, sports, entertainment and politics, with many ousted or forced to resign.



## 2018

Brett Kavanaugh is confirmed be a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, despite allegations form a high school classmate that he had held her down and sexually assaulted her at a party. The hearings caused a deep division, more along party lines than gender lines, in the Senate. Months later, female candidates experience a new Year of the Woman, with a record 102 women elected to the House. After elections and the appointment of Republican Martha McSally in Arizona, the Senate in the 116th Congress will be a quarter women, a record. Females represented about two-thirds of the Democrats' pickups in the House, crediting them with flipping the House from GOP control to Democratic control. Women also won nine governor's races in Maine, Iowa, Michigan, South Dakota, New Mexico Kansas, Oregon, Rhode Island and in the U.S. territory of Guam, which elected its first female governor.

