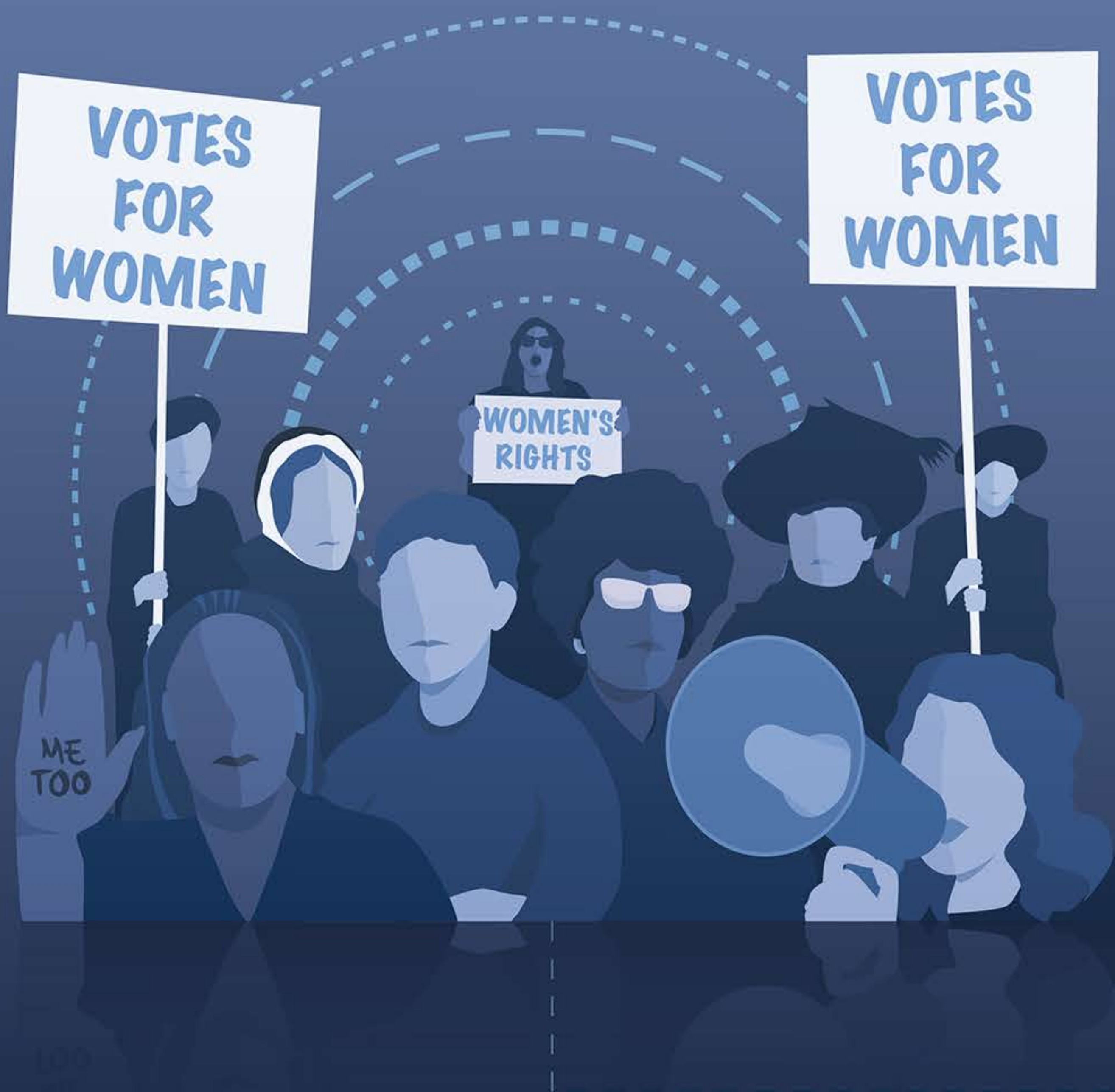


# RADICAL WOMEN

A Commemoration of  
the 100th Anniversary  
of the 19th Amendment





## HISTORICAL WOMEN IN RHODE ISLAND



### ELIZABETH BUFFUM CHACE

1806 - 1899

**Buffum Chace** was a Quaker who was a firm believer in the abolition of slavery. She and her husband Samuel Chace used their house in Valley Falls as a station on the Underground Railroad during the 1830s-60s.

She was very active in the Anti-slavery, Women's Rights, and Prison Reform movements of the mid to late 1800s. Buffum Chace was honored with a bronze bust at the Rhode Island State House and she is lionized as "The Conscience of Rhode Island" for tirelessly championing the rights of the less fortunate. She hosted many prominent abolitionists at her home, including William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and William Wells Brown.

### IDA LEWIS

1842 - 1911

From Newport, **Lewis** was one of the first female lighthouse keepers. This role, previously considered a man's job, helped women break out of traditional gender roles in the workplace. She made her first sea rescue of four men in 1854 when she was just 12 years old and continued to save countless lives throughout her career.

At one point, she was the highest paid lighthouse keeper in the United States. In 1879, Lewis made a salary of \$750 a year.



### ALVA VANDERBILT BELMONT

1853 - 1933

**Vanderbilt Belmont** was a well-known suffragist and was popularly known as a feminist and socialite of Newport. She was prominently involved in the building of the Marble House and owned the home after she divorced from William Kissam Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt Belmont was an advanced woman of her time. She got divorced during a time in which divorce was looked down upon, but she did not want to stay in an unfaithful marriage. Throughout her time at Marble House, she held many protests and meetings to fight for equal rights.

### CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

1860 - 1935

Born in Hartford, CT, **Perkins Gilman** attended RISD for a time. In 1898, Perkins published *Women and Economics*, a manifesto that attracted great attention and was translated into seven languages. In a radical call for economic independence for women, she dissected romanticized contemporary ideas of womanhood and motherhood. *Human Work* (1904) continued the arguments of *Women and Economics*. Later books include *What Diantha Did* (1910) and *The Man-Made World* (1911), in which she distinguished the characteristic virtues and vices of men and women and attributed the ills of the world to the dominance of men. From 1909 to 1916, Gilman edited and published the monthly *Forerunner*, a magazine of feminist articles, views, and fiction. She also contributed to other periodicals. Gilman joined Jane Addams in founding the Woman's Peace Party in 1915.



### ANN BURLAK

1911 - 2002

**Burlak** was an influential, early female labor leader and activist who led the way for female activism in the workplace. She was known for being involved in textile union organizations and strikes, especially in Rhode Island. She fought for better wages, work conditions, unionization to protect workers' rights, and equal pay for women. She was nearly deported for her political beliefs and advocacy for free speech.



## WOMEN OF COLOR AND VOTING

**The 19th Amendment** gave women the right to vote, but in reality, it would take years before all women were able to exercise that right. The movement to obtain the right to vote for all women is an arc containing decades of activism.

There is a direct line of African-Americans who mobilized for ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It was at this point that legal barriers which previously prevented Black Americans from exercising their right to vote were removed at state and local levels.

Although Native Americans were legally named citizens of the United States in 1924, the road to vote was not an easy one. The right of Native Americans to vote in U.S. elections was recognized in 1948 with the landmark cases *Harrison v. Laveen* and *Trujillo v. Garley*. Even so, they were not eligible to vote in every state until 1962, when Utah became the last state to remove formal barriers.



**"Princess Red Wing"** was born Mary E. Glasko on March 21, 1896. She became Squaw Sachem of the New England Council of Chiefs in 1945, a position that allowed her to preside over sacred ceremonies and festivals. She was also a prominent storyteller in the Narragansett community, keeping alive the oral traditions of her tribe. She preserved their history by founding the Tomaquag Indian Memorial Museum. Red Wing was instrumental in securing citizenship and, by default, voting rights for Native people in Rhode Island.

- **1789:** The Constitution grants the states the power to set voting requirements. Generally, States limited this right to property-owning or tax-paying white males.
- **1869-1920:** Some states allow women to vote. Wyoming was the first state to give women voting rights in 1869.
- **1920:** Women are guaranteed the right to vote in all US States by the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In practice, the same restrictions that hindered the ability of poor or non-white men to vote now also applied to poor or non-white women.
- **1924:** All Native Americans are granted citizenship and the right to vote, regardless of tribal affiliation. By this point, approximately two-thirds of Native Americans were already citizens.
- **1943:** Chinese immigrants are given the right to citizenship and the right to vote by the Magnuson Act.
- **1965:** Protection of voter registration and voting for racial minorities, later applied to linguistic minorities, is established by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This has also been applied to correcting discriminatory election systems and districting.

**National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACW)** was a social movement throughout the United States which established the idea that woman had a moral duty and responsibility to transform public policy. Women's clubs became very active in women's suffrage. Organizations, dedicated especially to suffrage, began to be formed after the Civil War. As women's clubs grew, so did suffrage organizations. African-American women's clubs like the NACW not only fought for women's suffrage, but also for the right of black men to vote. Many black women were involved in groups like the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). Women involved in the National Baptist Woman's Convention also supported suffrage.



**"The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation because in the degradation of woman the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source."**

- LUCRETIA MOTT | American Abolitionist and Women's Rights Activist



## WOMEN OF THE WORLD WARS

### WORLD WAR I

#### Mary E. Jackson

1867-1923

Born in 1867 in Providence to Henry and Amelia Jackson, Mary Elizabeth Jackson was a member of Pond Street Baptist Church and charter member of the Providence NAACP. **Jackson** worked tirelessly to halt discriminatory practices and improve working conditions for women of color. A statistician at Rhode Island Labor Department, during WWI she was appointed as a Special Worker for Colored Girls on the national YWCA War Work Council, analyzing employment trends and recommending programs to encourage fair employment of women of color.



#### GERTRUDE BRAY

1888 - 1975

**Bray** was a Rhode Island resident who served in World War I as a nurse in a YMCA group attached to the Rainbow Division. Her actions during the war consisted mostly of duties of a nurse, and she worked on sewing the silk rainbows that would be added onto the uniforms of the soldiers. Along with other YMCA workers, she cooked 10,000 doughnuts a day near the front line of St. Mihiel. For her bravery under fire, Bray received an honorable mention and commendation.

### WORLD WAR II

The women working in the home-front factories changed the idea that women weren't capable of roles that were traditionally filled by men. Women working in factories were a primary reason the United States was as effective as it was in bringing the war to an end. Women broke down sexist barriers and were able to show they were capable of hard labor. Women were important in helping win the war because of how quickly they created supplies for the war effort.

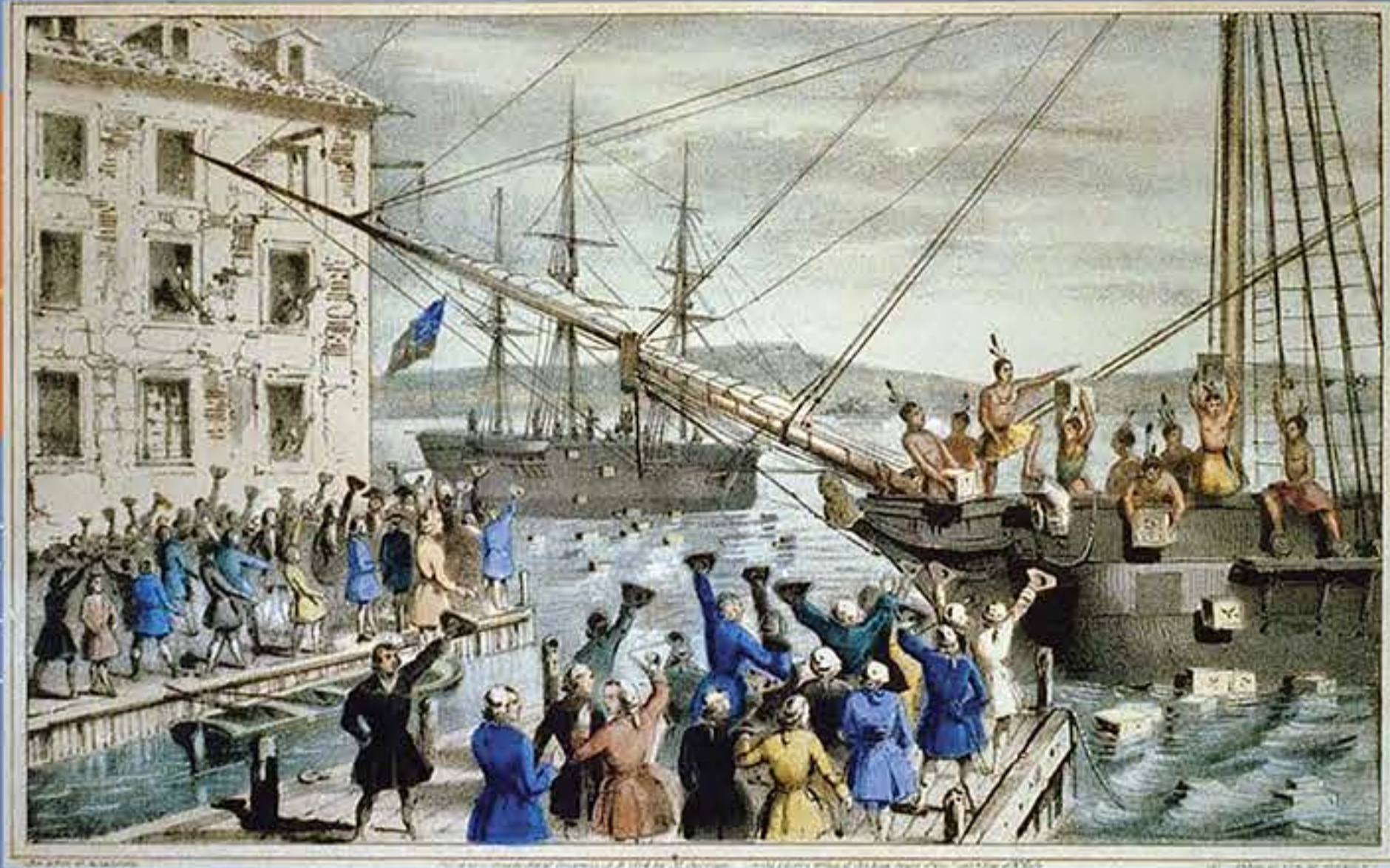


### WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

- **Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)** were established during World War II, on August 5, 1943.
- WASP flew a total of 60 million miles performing a variety of missions. Although these women flew military aircraft, they were considered civilians, and were not granted military benefits or burials.
- WASP were granted retroactive military status in 1977, and were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2010.



## HISTORICAL MOVEMENTS



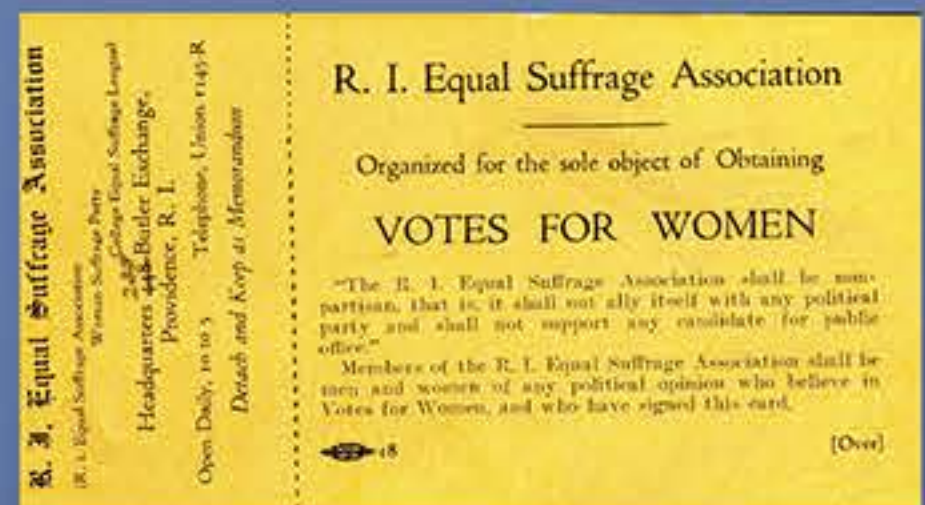
### THE DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY

(1765)

These women helped kick start the American Revolution and started boycotting British goods. They encouraged the men to go against the British and their taxes. The Daughters of Liberty were women of all ages and social standing. Instead of using and drinking British tea, they made their own, called Liberty Tea. Many women would work hand-in-hand with the Sons of Liberty to create the Boston Tea Party.

**“With ladies on our side, we  
can make every Tory tremble.”**

- SAMUEL ADAMS



### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

(1868 - 1915)

This group joined with the College Equal Suffrage League and the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Party to form the Rhode Island Equal Suffrage Association. Notable members and founders of the association:

**PAULINA WRIGHT DAVIS**

(1813 -1876)

**ELIZABETH BUFFUM CHACE**

(1806 -1899)

This group was influential in supporting and educating RI citizens about the right of women to vote. They continually pushed for legislation to grant the vote to women in Rhode Island and hosted numerous conventions to support the cause.





## HISTORICAL MOVEMENTS



### WOMEN'S LABOR MOVEMENT (1881- PRESENT)

Women working in home-front factories opened the door and sparked the conversation surrounding labor equality. The labor movement set the groundwork for women who wanted to continue working in what society previously defined as “men’s” work. These nontraditional occupations for women would become more natural because of this movement, especially as the war came to an end. Women’s efforts on the homefront were a major contributing factor to an effective end of the war.



### WOMEN'S LIBERATION UNION OF RHODE ISLAND (1969 - 1984)

This group formed in the fall of 1969 by a group of women at Brown University concerned with improving the status of women in society. They developed through student activism in the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the publication of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. Through union-filed lawsuits, organized protests, distribution of literature, and working with other agencies, they aimed to achieve equal rights for women.



# RADICAL WOMEN

WOMEN'Sfund  
RHODE ISLAND

## RECENT CAMPAIGNS

### #METOO

2006/2017

**Tarana Burke** created the Me Too movement back in 2006, but it became globally recognized when Alyssa Milano tweeted about it in 2017. The original purpose of this movement was to empower women through empathy, especially young and vulnerable women. The goal has changed and expanded. In addition to compassion, there is also a focus on determining the best ways to hold perpetrators responsible and to stop the cycle of sexual assault.



### #TIMESUP

2018

**Time's Up** is a movement against sexual harassment and was founded on January 1, 2018 by Hollywood celebrities in response to the Weinstein effect and #MeToo movement.

**“Gender as it functions today is a grave injustice. I am angry. We should all be angry. Anger has a long history of bringing about positive change. But I am also hopeful, because I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to remake themselves for the better.”**

– CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE  
| Author, Activist, TED Talk star

### TOWARD GENDER EQUITY IN POLITICS

2019

A record number of women are sworn into the House of Representatives. During the State of the Union address, most wore suffragette white. 102 women hold seats in the House of Representatives, comprising 23.4% of the 435 members in 2019. The women represent 34 states; 89 are Democrats and 13 are Republicans.



### EQUAL PAY

2019

**The U.S. WOMEN'S NATIONAL SOCCER TEAM** won their fourth FIFA World Cup Victory and were met with chants of “Equal Pay” bringing the issue to an international stage.

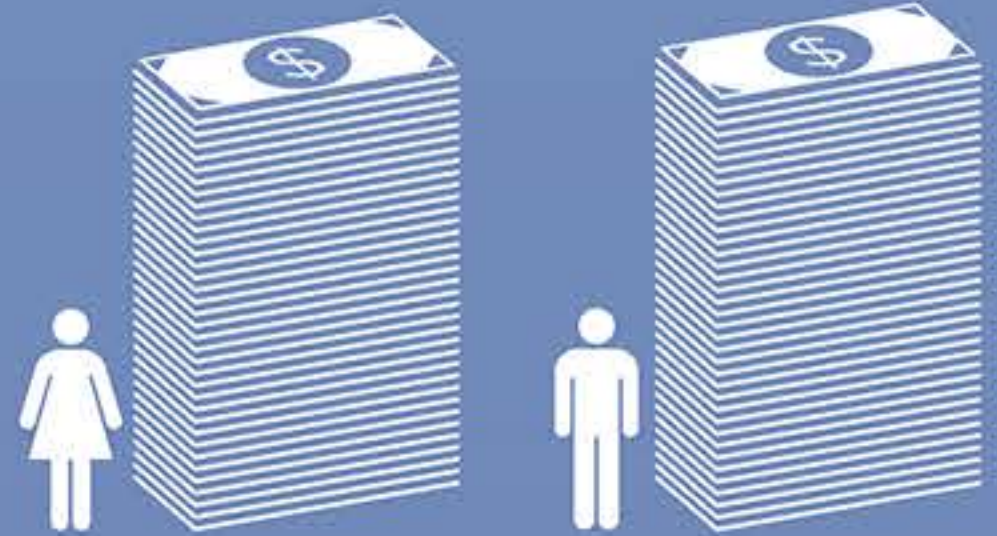




## WHERE WE ARE NOW IN RHODE ISLAND

### RHODE ISLAND'S LABOR FORCE

Women earn 84 cents for every dollar a man earns



At the current rate, women will not receive equal pay in RI until **2049**

Women earn an average of \$38,912 annually compared to men at \$55,073

Women's average earnings/year:

**\$38.912**

Men's average earnings/year:

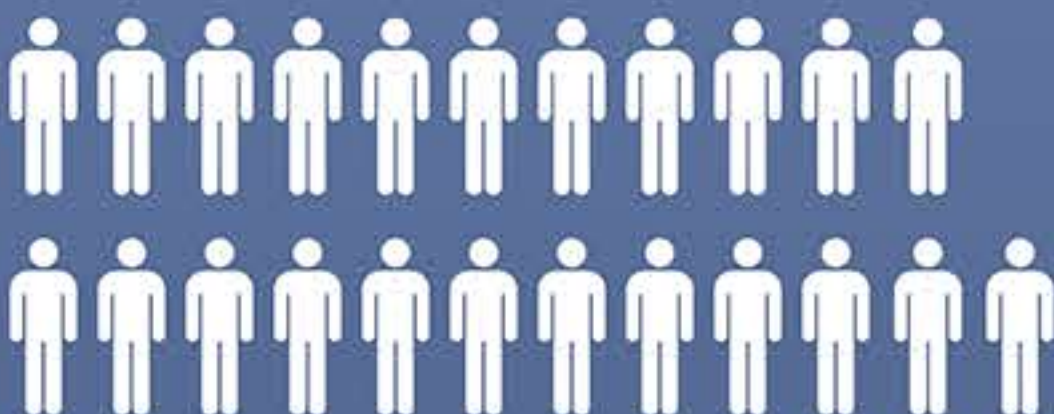
**\$55.073**



**25.1%**  
of employed women  
work in low-wage jobs



**13.1%**  
of RI women are  
living in poverty



Men are 2.3 times more likely to work in STEM occupations than women



**55.4 - 66.4%**  
of women are registered  
to vote but only...



**50.8%**  
of them actually voted



RI ranks 33 out of all states for elder and dependent care



RI ranks 14 out of all states for women elected into office

2020 - By embracing family-supported employment practices and public policies, we will ride a wave of the continued engagement of women of all races and ethnicities in the Ocean State economy, a wave that will usher in an era of broadly shared prosperity, equity, and justice.



## POLICY ALTERNATIVES

It is clear that many features of today's economy are not working for Rhode Island women. Four general approaches can be taken for women (and men) in the workforce seeking changes in their work lives to meet the needs of families better, and even the playing field between women and men. We touch on each of the methods below, including the positive (but not widely appreciated) impact of unions as agents of change for women in the workforce.

### EMPLOYERS STEP UP

Employers proactively recognize that it's good for their workers, good for the overall economy, and in most cases, also good for their bottom line to offer employees decent employment conditions, family-supporting wages, and benefits. While this approach won't drive systemic changes alone, there is considerable potential for leaders in the corporate world to raise the bar for corporate behavior, while also being supportive of outside efforts to raise the bar. A corporate audit will help result in family-friendly policies, fair wages, and equitable treatment of women and men.

### UNIONS AND SIMILAR FORMS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

Another approach is for workers to demand a better deal for themselves collectively. Rhode Island's working women who are represented by unions enjoy the advantages of union representation such as higher wages, better employment benefits, and more workplace safety. Unions also offer employers benefits; a unionized workforce generally has high-performance standards and lower turnover rates.

### GOVERNMENT REGULATION

Federal, state, and local governments set and enforce labor standards that ensure that employees are rewarded fairly for their work. We've seen this through labor standards like the minimum wage. A comprehensive suite of policies aimed at supporting families, such as paid sick leave, paid family leave, and supports for child care, living wages, and fair scheduling will go a long way towards improving equitable treatment of women in the economy.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The final approach is to support programming that assists more young women in achieving high school graduation or GED certification, and attaining a minimum level of training that allows them to enter STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) careers, which are in high demand in Rhode Island and can provide higher entry-level pay and benefits than typical entry-level jobs. Doing so will also help women to succeed in a globalized, knowledge-based economy.

**“When we invest in women and girls,  
we are investing in the people who  
invest in everyone else.”**

– MELINDA GATES | Philanthropist



**RADICAL  
WOMEN**

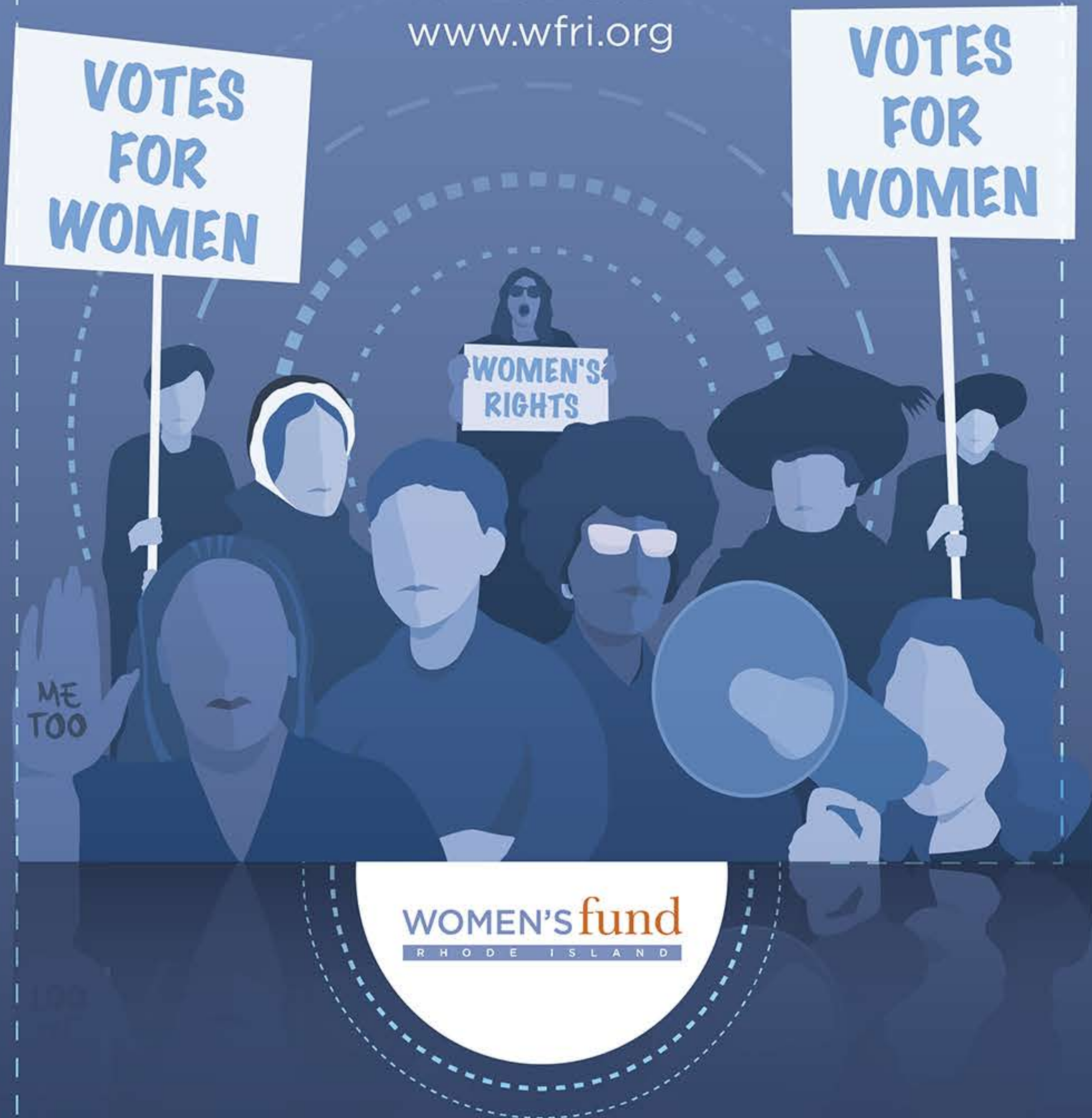
# THANK YOU!

The mission of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island is to invest in women and girls through research, advocacy, grant making and strategic partnerships designed to advance gender equity through systemic change.

Please consider donating to the only organization in the state whose mission and work is focused exclusively on gender equity.

Text "**GIVEWFRI**" to 44-321 to donate through your mobile device.

Women's Fund of Rhode Island  
245 Waterman St. #503  
Providence, RI 02906  
401-262-5657  
[www.wfri.org](http://www.wfri.org)



**WOMEN'Sfund**  
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OF RHODE ISLAND

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