

*Math - Roessing*

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NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE  
PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.

PRESIDENT

MISS ESTHER G. OGDEN  
171 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

171 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK

TELEPHONE, 4818 MURRAY HILL

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN

MRS. FRANK M. ROESSING

HEADQUARTERS

MUNSEY BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C.



Washington, D. C.  
September 29, 1916.

Dear State Congressional Chairman:

Our recent convention passed the following resolution:

"RESOLVED, That the 48th Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association instructs its Congressional Committee to concentrate all its resources upon a determined effort to carry the Federal Amendment through the last session of the 64th Congress. It pledges the support of the state organizations and authorizes the National Board to take such direction of the work in the states as may be necessary in its judgment to accomplish this end."

Our congressional conference in Atlantic City showed that if we are all to do comprehensive, efficient and up-to-date work on the Federal Amendment, certain activities must be undertaken and pushed more vigorously than ever before. For those who were not able to attend the conference, I will repeat some items briefly now. I will ask those who were at the conference to check off these items, making sure that they are covering them in their plans for the coming year.

May I just remind you that the National Board appoints the National Congressional Committee which thereby becomes its authorized agent for congressional work and with which therefore each state should cooperate fully and heartily.

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN: Appoint the congressional district chairman for your state early. Do not wait until Congress opens to find the right people. Secure them in advance, give them full information and instructions, let them study the plan of work and have a chance to be efficient.

Do your very best to have a good chairman of each congressional district in your state by November 15.

**FINANCES:** It is absolutely essential for your state organization in its budget to make an appropriation for the congressional work within your state. Too many of our state congressional chairman have been hampered in their work by lack of funds or no funds and have tried to finance their own work. This is not only unfair but wholly unsatisfactory. I beg, therefore, that you appeal to your state board to make some definite appropriation for the congressional work in your state. Inasmuch as your state budget probably has appropriations for organizers, publicity and literature, it will not be necessary for the congressional appropriation to be as large it would need to be otherwise, but it is necessary to have some definite understanding with the state board.

Our congressional work like every other kind cannot be done by imagination alone. It needs money and needs it right away, as Mrs. Catt's letter of September 18th states also.

**PUBLICITY:** Plan at least one state wide publicity story on the Federal Amendment each month. (You can probably do this in connection with the Monthly National demonstrations which it is planned to have). If you are using plate matter, use pictures in it as often as possible in connection with a story on the Federal Amendment! Start off with a picture of your state congressional chairman! I recognize that it may be delicate for you to suggest this to your publicity department but you can put all the blame on me. If you are still very shy, you might have a group picture made of the chairman with three or four of the district chairmen or members of the state congressional committee, in case you have committee members who are not district chairmen.

**LITERATURE:** Congressmen and Senators have never been circularized enough with suffrage literature. You know, or should know from your own records, which of your congressmen are opposed to suffrage or to the Amendment, and you should send them literature frequently just as you provide literature for men in the states in campaigns. The literature for congressmen can be more carefully chosen to fit each case because the number of men is fewer. Please plan to circularize with literature at least once a month any congressmen from your state who are indifferent, non-committal or opposed.

The National Association is preparing some special literature on the Federal Amendment. Copies will be mailed to you when ready. It can be secured from our National Publishing Company at 171 Madison Avenue, New York City.

If you can issue Federal Amendment literature of your own so much the better. I enclose a sample of card which the wide-awake suffragists of Kenosha County, Wisconsin are using, both by distribution and enclosing in mail. I suggest one change, and that is that is on the back where it says WRITE, the names of both United States Senators be used. This card could easily be adapted for state use by using the names of both senators and omitting the name of an individual congressman.

**CLIPPINGS:** If you have not already done so, plan a campaign of clippings for your congressmen. Send them clippings

on suffrage, especially interviews with prominent men who are favorable, that appear in any of the papers in their district and in the leading papers of their section of the country which are considered organs of their party. I can assure you that the congressmen read such clippings with interest. I have seen them do it often. Even the secretaries of the senators see that the senators know what is being published in the papers. As an evidence of their interest many of the men subscribe to clipping bureaus, but ordinarily they do not include woman suffrage in the list of subjects for which they subscribe. Therefore, it behooves us to see that they get the clippings on our subject.

Plan the work on the clippings systematically. It will give the women in each district something to do. See that every paper in each congressman's district is taken and clipped regularly by some district worker. If you get enough to make a good showing, be sure to send clippings about the October Amendment Day demonstrations in each district to all the candidates in that district.

FOLLOW UP WORK: Not any of us do enough of what I call follow-up work with our congressmen and senators. Most of us think that when we find out how the men stand, we have "covered the situation". We have only begun to find out where to work! The more obstinately opposed a man is, the more must you use your wits and ingenuity in planning tactful ways to overcome that opposition. Never give up. Remember that the more the man is opposed the more diplomacy is required, but that only makes the work the more interesting. Apply the same patient skill and art to those who are non-committal. The use of literature and clippings as above suggested are two kinds of follow up work. Another kind that has been sadly neglected is the cultivation of the families of the congressmen and senators, especially their wives. The younger members of the family should also be cultivated. Congress provides many illustrations that "a little child shall lead them".

NON PARTISANSHIP: Our convention heartily reaffirmed our policy of non-partisanship. As a state officer, don't ever forget all that non-partisanship means - that it means including in everything you do the representatives of every party in your state including the prohibition, socialist and independent parties. Remember that it is often the action of the minor which make the majority parties take notice and finally yield. In any event, the minor parties have always endorsed us and their candidates and members must not be forgotten or neglected. Also we cannot afford to take it for granted that because the parties have endorsed us every man in their columns is with us. We know that is not always the case.

This reminds me to beg you not to neglect friends. It is not necessary to keep on interviewing those strongly favorable nor to pester them, but let them know occasionally in some pleasant way that you have not forgotten their support.

**NATIONAL COMMITTEEMEN:** The Republican and Democratic parties each have a national committee consisting of one committeeman from each state. I find that only one of our state chairmen has appealed for the help of the national committeemen of her state in connection with obstreperous congressmen and senators. These committeemen are of course intested in the record of their party in Congress and I suggest that you apply for their assistance in the future. Do it by a personal interview if possible. Get some members of your Men's League to appeal to the committeemen. Do your work with these committeemen quietly and without publicity. You will seldom get results if you accompany your activity with these men with any kind of "demonstration" or newspaper articles.

**PLANKS:** Do not give up work on behalf of a plank in every party platform in your state endorsing the principle of woman suffrage, even if it takes until 1920 to get them. We must begin planning our work NOW for the Republican and Democratic National Conventions of 1920. Any of you who have had experience in getting planks into state party platforms know that it takes long work, hard work and constant work. Let us set for ourselves the ideal of having a plank endorsing woman suffrage in every party platform in every State before 1920. Then we will get the kind of National planks we want.

**HEADQUARTERS:** In every headquarters in your state see that there are signs in large letters advertising the Federal Amndment. I was horrified to find that in only two states did the suffragists have adequate Federal Amendment signs even in the state headquarters! See that not only state but all local headquarters have large signs.

**VOICELESS SPEECH:** Do not let the use of the voiceless speech on the Federal Amendment stop with the October Amendment days. Use this voiceless speech in drug store windows, empty shop windows, and at meetings from this time on until the Amendment is passed by Congress.

**CHRISTMAS:** When you are doing your Christmas shopping early, remember Christmas cards for all of your congressmen. The National Committee will send them Christmas cards but you should be sure to send them Greetings from every state organization, and also from your district organizations if possible. Again I give you my testimony that the men are immensely pleased with such Greetings. This suggestion may seem insignificant to you, but more than one decision in this world has been turned by a very small act.

**LETTERS:** Please read immediately and carefully each letter from our committee. It is not a circular letter - it is a letter directly to you. Even though the same letters goes to every state we count upon you individually to act and respond for your own state. In other words, we must hold you responsible just as you must hold your district chairmen responsible when you send the same letter to each one of them.

I wish to make one explanation about these letters. They are addressed to state congressional chairmen but a copy is always sent to each state president for her information.

Occasionally a state president feels that it is incumbent upon her to act upon these letters. Our National committee does not expect the state presidents to act upon our letters unless there is a vacancy in the state Congressional chairmanship.

**DATES:** Please be sure to date your reports and every bit of data of any kind that you send to this office. I regret to say that too often important interviews and data are sent to us undated and are therefore of no use.

**REPORTS:** Please do not fail during the coming year to send a regular monthly report of the progress of the congressional work in your state to our committee. The report on your congressional candidates which I have asked you to send to this office by October 3 will be considered as your report for September. Thereafter, send your monthly report so that it will reach us by the 3rd of each month if possible.

The report blank sent in Mrs. Catt's letter of September 18, a copy of which you are to fill and return to this office on November 1, will serve as the main portion of your report for October. In addition I wish to ask you to include in your October report the number of district chairmen in your state, with names and addresses of each. It helps us if we know who each district chairman is, as we can bring her name into the interviews here and show that we are in touch with the local work. In case all of your district chairmen are not secured in October, please send us their names and addresses as rapidly thereafter as you can secure women who will act.

I cannot give you an exact form for each month's report at this time because the work of each month varies. I suggest, however, that you be sure to cover the work in each district by mentioning any special work done therein. That helps us more than I can tell you when we are lobbying here.

So much for the future - now for the present.

**HUGHES MEETINGS:** We must cover all the meetings at which Mr. Hughes speaks in every State from now to election day. As his October itinerary will not take him into every state, we will send a special letter to you if he is to be in your state. This is just an advance notice.

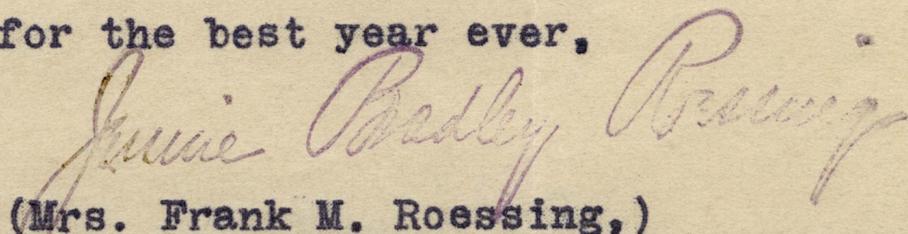
**CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES:** A tabulated list of the replies received by our committee from congressional candidates in your state will be sent to you by October 4, so that you can use them in connection with your October 7 Amendment Day demonstration. We shall release them here for publicity on October 7. We shall ask you not to release them for publicity before the 7th. We will send them to you before that day so that your press department can prepare the story it desires to go with them.

OCTOBER AMENDMENT DAYS: On September 18 a long circular letter was sent by Mrs. Catt from our New York office to the state presidents with regard to October Federal Amendment Days. When I asked if copies had been sent to my dear state congressional chairmen I found that they had been overlooked in the pressure of work and that the supply of letters had been exhausted. I therefore asked Mrs. Catt to send a letter to each State president telling her to forward her letter or a copy thereof to her state chairmen at once. This letter Mrs. Catt sent on September 25. I therefore hope that you have received this valuable letter of Mrs. Catt's by this time. If you have not done so, please write your state president to send it at once.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE: Miss Ruth White was appointed Secretary of our committee by Mrs. Catt last July as you may remember. Miss White returned here from Atlantic City, and will live here from now on. Miss Heloise Meyer, one of our new National officers, has also come to Washington and will reside here in order to give her whole time to the work of our committee. A number of inquiries have come to me regarding the next National congressional chairman. I wish I could tell you who she will be but I do not know! Mrs. Catt and the new Board have asked me to continue as chairman and I have consented to do so for the present, although I do not feel that I can continue through the short term. I recognize fully the weakness of having a change in the middle of a Congress but I think that you do all know that my life is not at this time my own to determine. I will do my utmost to retain the chairmanship until such time as a change can be made most expediently. October first I leave Washington for a month's rest, which is the first vacation I have had in four years, so that you will agree I ought to go. Miss White and Miss Meyer, and a little later Mrs. Walter McNab Miller, our new First Vice-President, will be here so that you may feel assured that the work will go on without a day's relaxation.

I wish to thank the many state chairmen and presidents who have done their utmost to cooperate with our committee and with me as chairman during the past year. The work here is strenuous and full of grave responsibility. Often you have made the sun shine by your faith and deeds on what would have been otherwise a gloomy day. I wish I could tell you how convinced I am that we can get the Federal Amendment through in the near future if our workers in every state will carry out comprehensively and thoroughly the plans for the coming year. After all, we cannot blame other people if we do not succeed in our job; equally we may be assured that if we do our work well, none can long delay our victory.

Yours for the best year ever,



(Mrs. Frank M. Roessing,)  
National Congressional Committee Chairman.