

SPEER
NEY AT LAW
AT NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
T WORTH, TEXAS

ORIGINAL BILL - PRIMARY SUFFRAGE
as drawn by JUDGE SPEER
just beneath this letter.

February 15, 1918.

Mrs. Minnie Fisher Cunningham,
President, Texas Equal Suffrage Association,
306 Trust Building,
Galveston, Texas.

Dear Mrs. Cunningham:-

I have your favor of February 13th in which you were kind enough to do me the honor to request that I should write a bill for submission to the forthcoming extraordinary session, providing for female suffrage in primary elections.

I have looked into the matter and am satisfied that it is within the power of the Legislature to authorize women to vote in primary elections or participate in nominating conventions. In accordance therefore with your request I have prepared a form of bill which I believe fully covers the subject and enclose the same herewith for such use as you and the Association see fit to make of it.

You will observe I have provided that the payment of a poll tax shall in no case be required of a woman as a qualification to vote in primary elections or to participate in nominating conventions. I do not think our women should be required in any case to pay a poll tax.

It might not be amiss to state, my reason for thinking such a law is not unconstitutional, is that the constitution in no manner prescribes the qualifications of those who participate in primary elections or nominating conventions, but does prescribe only the qualifications of "electors", that is to say, those participating in the elections provided for in constitution and statute whereat are elected the various state, county and municipal officers. I take it to be the prescribing of qualifications of those who are permitted by law in nominating the candidates, whether by primary or convention, is a matter peculiarly within the province and power of the Legislature.

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Mrs. M. F. C., #2.

Please do not hesitate to make any change you think proper in the accompanying bill and please do not hesitate to submit the same to any other person you may like for examination and criticism.

I sincerely trust the matter of amending the election laws will be submitted and an opportunity will be afforded for the extra session to pass this meritorious measure.

Yours very truly,

Ovie Speer

Enc.
S-C

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED

An Act to provide that women may vote in all Primary Elections and Nominating Conventions in Texas; prescribing qualifications for such voters and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. From and after the passage of this Act any woman, who otherwise possesses the qualifications of an elector under the Constitution and laws of this state, shall have the right to vote at any primary election or nominating convention held under the laws of this state, and the fact of her sex shall in nowise disqualify such person; provided the payment of a poll tax shall in no case be required of such woman as a qualification to vote in such primary election or ^{to} participate in such nominating convention.

SECTION 2. The fact that there is no law providing that women may vote in primary elections creates an emergency and an imperative public necessity that the constitutional rule requiring that bills be read on three several days in each House be, and the same is, hereby suspended, and it is so enacted, and this Act shall become effective immediately upon its passage.

, February 13, 1918.

Judge Ocie Speer,
Fort Worth,
Texas?

My Dear Judge Speer:

Knowing your interest in and championship of our cause, I am writing to ask a tremendous favor of you.

We are working our heads off to get the right to vote in the July Primaries. We believe if ever the state of Texas needed the woman's vote, it needs it now, with one hundred and fifty thousand of our soldiers disfranchised, and our alien enemy enfranchised and paying his poll tax with great eagerness.

We are advised that the Terrell election law will be submitted for amendment at the special session, and we want it amended to permit us to vote, according to the idea in the attached bill, which was offered by Senator Lattimore at the regular session. Checking our list, we feel sure of strength enough to pass it. And so I beg you to write the Amendment for us, as, if it is by you, no one will hesitate to vote for it in the fear of it not being constitutional.

Please, Judge Speer, give this the earliest possible attention as already our friends in the Legislature are writing in, asking for copies of the Amendment we want passed. And if you think I am asking a great deal, I know that I am, and our gratitude will be in proportion.

Hoping to hear from you soon,

Very truly yours,

MFC-EHL

President.