

EVANSTON, IL (August 26, 2010) – Today Rep. Jan Schakowsky, (IL-9) released the following statement on the 90th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, and in recognition of Women's Equality Day. In 1971, Congress adopted a resolution introduced by Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY) to recognize August 26th as Women's Equality Day.

“Today we celebrate Women’s Equality Day and mark 90 years since women were granted the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Before our right to vote was ratified, however, it took legions of pioneering women more than 70 years get there.

“We owe an enormous debt of gratitude those who fought on behalf of their own dignity and that of future generations. Three women in particular must be remembered and celebrated for their unwavering determination on behalf of women: Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony. Without them, women would not be where they are today. Although their fight paved the road to this essential right for women, not one of them lived to see the 19th Amendment ratified.

“Women have come a very long way in the nine decades since suffrage passed: We now have three women serving as Supreme Court Justices, and we have the first woman Speaker of the House in Nancy Pelosi. And in this Congress, we passed the Lily Ledbetter Act, which restores the right of women and other workers to challenge unfair pay in court. This Congress also passed health care reform, which does away with the egregious practices of charging women more for coverage or denying coverage because of pregnancy, a past c-section, or domestic violence.

“But women still have miles to go. Women still earn less than our men, yet we are increasingly serving as the sole household breadwinner in this economic downturn.

“And women still comprise a pitifully small proportion of federal, state and local government jobs. It has been said that the average female politician thinks about running for seven years before throwing her hat in the ring. The average man? Two weeks. As Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, I constantly urge women to run for office and to bring a needed women’s perspective to elected office. Today, on Women’s Equality Day, I reaffirm this call to service.”