



Ain't I a Woman?

1864

Sojourner Truth

Well, children, where there is so much **racket** there must be something **out of kilter**. **P1**
I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

- 5** That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted **P2**
over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into
carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ar'n't I a woman? Look at
me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man
could head me! And ar'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man -
10 when I could get it - and **bear the lash** as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen
children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief,
none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

- Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of **P3**
audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's
15 rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart,
wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

racket: noise
out of kilter: unbalanced

bear the lash: handle pain, but literally, in the
context of slavery, surviving a whipping



Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. **P4**

20 If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them. **P5**

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say. **P6**



Equal Rights for Women

Washington, D.C., May 21, 1969

Shirley Chisholm

Mr. Speaker,

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When a young woman graduates from college and starts looking for a job, she is likely to have a frustrating and even **demeaning** experience ahead of her. If she walks into an office for an interview, the first question she will be asked is, "Do you type?"

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- 5 There is a calculated system of prejudice that lies unspoken behind that question. Why is it acceptable for women to be secretaries, librarians, and teachers, but totally unacceptable for them to be managers, administrators, doctors, lawyers, and Members of Congress?

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- 10 The unspoken assumption is that women are different. They do not have executive ability, orderly minds, stability, leadership skills, and they are too emotional.

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It has been observed before that society for a long time, discriminated against another minority, the blacks, on the same basis - that they were different and inferior. The happy little homemaker and the contented "**old darkey**" on the plantation were both produced by prejudice.

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demeaning: humiliating

"old darkey": a derogatory and racist name for African-Americans used in the early 1900s



15 As a black person, I am no stranger to race prejudice. But the truth is that in the political world I have been far oftener discriminated against because I am a woman than because I am black. P6

Prejudice against blacks is becoming unacceptable although it will take years to eliminate it. But it is doomed because, slowly, white America is beginning to admit that it exists. Prejudice against women is still acceptable. There is very little understanding yet of the **immorality** involved in double pay scales and the classification of most of the better jobs as "for men only." P7

More than half of the population of the United States is female. But women occupy only 2 percent of the managerial positions. They have not even reached the level of **tokenism** yet. No women sit on the AFL-CIO council or Supreme Court. There have been only two women who have held Cabinet rank, and at present there are none. Only two women now hold ambassadorial rank in the diplomatic corps. In Congress, we are down to one Senator and 10 Representatives. P8

Considering that there are about 3 1/2 million more women in the United States than men, this situation is outrageous. P9

It is true that part of the problem has been that women have not been aggressive in demanding their rights. This was also true of the black population for many years. They submitted to **oppression** and even cooperated with it. Women have done the same thing. But now there is an awareness of this situation particularly among the younger segment of the population. P10

immorality: without moral principles
tokenism: a policy of making only a symbolic effort, but not really meaning it

oppression: unjust or cruel power



As in the field of equal rights for blacks, Spanish-Americans, the Indians, and other groups, laws will not change such deep-seated problems overnight. But they can be used to provide protection for those who are most abused, and to begin the process of **evolutionary** change by compelling the insensitive majority to reexamine it's

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40 **unconscious** attitudes.

It is for this reason that I wish to introduce today a proposal that has been before every Congress for the last 40 years and that sooner or later must become part of the basic law of the land - the Equal Rights Amendment.

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Let me note and try to refute two of the commonest arguments that are offered against this amendment. One is that women are already protected under the law and do not need legislation. Existing laws are not adequate to secure equal rights for women. Sufficient proof of this is the concentration of women in lower paying, **menial**, unrewarding jobs, and their incredible scarcity in the upper level jobs. If women are already equal, why is it such an event whenever one happens to be elected to Congress?

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It is obvious that discrimination exists. Women do not have the opportunities that men do. And women that do not conform to the system, who try to break with the accepted patterns, are stigmatized as odd and unfeminine. The fact is that a woman who aspires to be chairman of the board, or a Member of the House, does so for exactly the same reasons as any man. Basically, these are that she thinks she can do the job and she wants to try.

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evolutionary: gradual
unconscious: unaware

menial: lowly, unskilled



A second argument often heard against the Equal Rights Amendment is that it would **P15** eliminate legislation that many States and the Federal Government have enacted giving special protection to women and that it would throw the marriage and divorce laws into chaos.

- 60** As for the marriage laws, they are due for a **sweeping** reform, and an excellent **P16** beginning would be to wipe the existing ones off the books. Regarding special protection for working women, I cannot understand why it should be needed. Women need no protection that men do not need. What we need are laws to protect working people, to guarantee them fair pay, safe working conditions, protection against sickness **65** and layoffs, and provision for dignified, comfortable retirement.

Men and women need these things equally. That one sex needs protection more **P17** than the other is a male **supremacist** myth as ridiculous and unworthy of respect as the white supremacist myths that society is trying to cure itself of at this time.



“Wimbledon Has Sent Me a Message: I’m Only a Second-Class Champion”

The Times, June 26, 2006

Venus Williams

Have you ever been let down by someone that you had long admired, respected and looked up to? Little in life is more disappointing, particularly when that person does something that goes against the very heart of what you believe is right and fair. **P1**

When I was a little girl, and Serena and I played matches together, we often **P2**
5 pretended that we were in the final of a famous tournament. More often than not we imagined we were playing on the Centre Court at **Wimbledon**. Those two young sisters from Compton, California, were “Wimbledon champions” many times, years before our dreams of playing there became reality.

There is nothing like playing at Wimbledon; you can feel the footprints of the legends **P3**
10 of the game — men and women — that have graced those courts. There isn’t a player who doesn’t dream of holding aloft the Wimbledon trophy. I have been fortunate to do so three times, including last year. That win was the highlight of my career to date, the **culmination** of so many years of work and determination, and at a time when most people didn’t consider me to be a **contender**.

Wimbledon: an important international tennis competition that is played every year in Wimbledon, in London, England

culmination: the highest point
contender: a competitor



15 So the decision of the All England Lawn Tennis Club yet again to treat women as lesser players than men — undeserving of the same amount of prize money — has a particular sting. P4

I'm disappointed not for myself but for all of my fellow women players who have struggled so hard to get here and who, just like the men, give their all on the courts of SW19. I'm disappointed for the great legends of the game, such as **Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert**, who have never stopped fighting for equality. And disappointed that the home of tennis is sending a message to women across the world that we are inferior. P5

With power and status comes responsibility. Well, Wimbledon has power and status. P6

25 The time has come for it to do the right thing by paying men and women the same sums of prize money. The total prize pot for the men's events is £5,197,440; for the women it is £4,446,490. The winner of the ladies' singles receives £30,000 less than the men's winner; the runner-up £15,000 less, and so on down to the first-round losers.

How can it be that Wimbledon finds itself on the wrong side of history? How can the words Wimbledon and inequality be allowed to **coexist**? I've spent my life overcoming challenges and those who said certain things couldn't be achieved for this or that reason. My parents taught me that dreams can come true if you put in the effort. Maybe that's why I feel so strongly that Wimbledon's **stance** devalues the principle of **meritocracy** and **diminishes** the years of hard work that women on the tour have put into becoming professional tennis players. P7

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Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert: famous female tennis players who have won the Wimbledon tournament, and have championed women's rights
coexist: to live together or be together peacefully

stance: attitude or position towards something
meritocracy: a social system that awards people based on their ability
diminishes: makes seem less important



I believe that athletes — especially female athletes in the world’s leading sport for women — should serve as role models. The message I like to **convey** to women and girls across the globe is that there is no glass ceiling. My fear is that Wimbledon is loudly and clearly sending the opposite message: 128 men and 128 women compete in **the**

40 **singles main draw** at Wimbledon; **the All England Club** is saying that the accomplishments of the 128 women are worth less than those of the 128 men. It diminishes the **stature** and **credibility** of such a great event in the eyes of all women.

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The funny thing is that Wimbledon treats men and women the same in so many other respects; winners receive the same trophy and honorary membership. And as

45 you enter Centre Court, the two photographs of last year’s men’s and women’s champions are hung side by side, proudly and equally.

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So why does Wimbledon choose to place a lesser value on my championship trophy than that of the 2005 men’s winner **Roger Federer**? The All England Club is familiar with my views on the subject; at Wimbledon last year, the day before the final, I presented

50 my views to it and its **French Open** counterparts. Both clearly gave their response: they are firmly in the inequality for women camp.

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Wimbledon has argued that women’s tennis is worth less for a variety of reasons; it says, for example, that because men play a best of five sets game they work harder for their prize money.

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convey: to communicate
the singles main draw: the full field of singles players in the tournament
The All England Club: a private club that hosts the Wimbledon Tennis competition

stature: a level of achievement
credibility: believability, reputation
Roger Federer: Swiss professional tennis player, who has won the Wimbledon tournament 7 times
French Open: a major tennis tournament in Paris, France



55 This argument just doesn't make sense; first of all, women players would be happy **P12**
to play five sets matches in grand slam tournaments. Tim Phillips, the chairman of
the All England Club, knows this and even acknowledged that women players are
physically capable of this.

Secondly, tennis is unique in the world of professional sports. No other sport has **P13**
60 men and women competing for a grand slam championship on the same stage, at
the same time. So in the eyes of the general public the men's and women's games have
the same value.

Third, athletes are also entertainers; we enjoy huge and equal celebrity and are paid **P14**
for the value we deliver to broadcasters and spectators, not the amount of time we
65 spend on the stage. And, for the record, the ladies' final at Wimbledon in 2005 lasted 45
minutes longer than the men's. No extra charge.

Let's not forget that the US Open, for 33 years, and the Australian Open already **P15**
award equal prize money. No male player has complained — why would they?

Wimbledon has justified treating women as second class because we do more for **P16**
70 the tournament. The argument goes that the top women — who are more likely
also to play doubles matches than their male peers — earn more than the top men if you
count singles, doubles and mixed doubles prize money. So the more we support the
tournament, the more unequally we should be treated! But doubles and mixed doubles
are separate events from the singles competition. Is Wimbledon suggesting that, if the
75 top women withdrew from the doubles events, that then we would deserve equal prize
money in singles? And how then does the All England Club explain why the pot of
women's doubles prize money is nearly £130,000 smaller than the men's doubles prize
money?



- Equality is too important a **principle** to give up on for the sake of less than 2 per cent of the profit that the All England Club will make at this year's tournament. Profit that men and women will contribute to equally through sold-out sessions, TV ratings or attraction to sponsors. Of course, one can never distinguish the exact value brought by each sex in a combined men's and women's championship, so any attempt to place a lesser value on the women's contribution is an exercise in pure subjectivity. **P17**
- 80**
- 85** Let's put it another way, the difference between men and women's prize money in 2005 was £456,000 — less than was spent on ice cream and strawberries in the first week. So the refusal of the All England Club, which declared a profit of £25 million from last year's tournament, to pay equal prize money can't be about cash. It can only be trying to make a social and political point, one that is out of step with modern society. **P18**
- 90** I intend to keep doing everything I can until Billie Jean's original dream of equality is made real. It's a shame that the name of the greatest tournament in tennis, an event that should be a positive symbol for the sport, is **tarnished**. **P19**

principle: ethical standard, belief

tarnish: to diminish or destroy the purity of something

Start studying Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?. Learn vocabulary, terms and more with flashcards, games and other study tools. She was speaking at a women's convention, which means she was most likely speaking to people around her own age. Normally, someone would be more formal when addressing so many people at a formal event. In paragraphs 2 and 4, Sojourner Truth makes specific references to two men in the audience. And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full? Then that little man in black there,