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Letter, 1915, November 4, Mrs. Harvey C. Garber and Mrs. Julius F. Stone to Dear Suffragist

Harvey C. Garber
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Dear Suffragist,

Two methods of obtaining votes for women are before the Suffragists of the United States. One is State by State: and the other by an amendment to the United States Constitution, which when ratified by the legislatures of 36 States, would enfranchise the women in every State of the Union, and would crown with success the whole suffrage movement. Both methods have been advocated by the suffrage leaders ever since the Civil War and the adoption of the XV amendment--to secure votes for negroes--opened this avenue to the suffrage.

Hitherto all the successes gained have been by amendments to the State constitutions, ratified by a majority of the voters at the polls. By this method the women have gained votes in eleven States. In addition, by act of the legislature, women have been given voting privileges of a more or less limited kind in a number of other states--notably in Illinois, where women enjoy full municipal suffrage and also the presidential vote.

For many years this state by state method of enfranchisement seemed the only possible or feasible plan. Now, however, that women already help to elect the President, Senate and House of Representatives at Washington, it seems reasonable to think that a combined effort by suffragists all over the country would result in the passage by Congress of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment--the measure first introduced by Miss Anthony--which would sweep away the disqualification of sex. Last year, at the moment when, after 40 years success seemed almost in sight, another amendment was introduced in Congress. This second amendment, known as the Shafroth-Palmer amendment--would not enfranchise women. It would only provide a means whereby amendments to the state constitutions could be submitted to the voters without their being passed by the state legislatures.

Experience has shown that it is easier to obtain the passage of an amendment through the legislature of a state than to secure a majority of votes for it at the polls. There has in recent years been no lack of campaign states. Prospects would be brighter at the present moment in either New York or Massachusetts if only one of these states were preparing for the popular vote, instead of both of them. In 1914 in all the states where amendments were submitted by initiative petition they were defeated, and of the seven campaign states of that year only two--Montana and Nevada--in both of which the amendments had been twice passed by the legislatures, were the suffragists successful.
There is no reason to believe that this second amend-
ment--the Shafroth-Palmer amendment--would be passed by Congress
and ratified by the states any more readily than the real suf-
frage amendment--the Susan B. Anthony amendment. On the contrary
much more progress has been made by the S.B.A. amendment; which
obtained an actual majority in the Senate in March, 1914, and a
vote of 174 to 204 in the House of Representatives in January 1915.

The National Woman Suffrage Association is supporting
both amendments: but support cannot be so strong when it is di-
vided over two measures with absolutely divergent aims. If we
believe that the Susan B. Anthony amendment can be passed in the
Sixty-Fourth Congress, it is impossible for us to regard the
other amendment in any other light than as a real hindrance. The
convention of the National Association will take place in Decem-
ber and its future policy will then be decided by the delegates.
A strong expression of opinion from Ohio would have its effect;
for the O.W.S.A. is a member of the National, and as such it has
the right to endeavor to influence or change its policy.

Another organization--the Congressional Union--was
formed in 1913. From the first this suffrage body had but one
object--the passage by Congress of the S. B. Anthony amendment,
and its ratification by the states. Unfortunately misunderstand-
ings and some bitterness have arisen between the National and
the Congressional Union and this division threatens the success
of the S.B.Anthony amendment in Congress. It seems immensely de-
sirable that an end should be put to this condition of things,
and harmony restored to suffrage ranks. As members of both the
C.U. and the National we are deeply anxious for peace, and espe-
cially for a modification of the attitude of the National
towards the C.U. We wish to see the C.U. accepted as a body loy-
ally working for votes for women, and not treated as an enemy.
Such a modification of the policy of the National could also be
a demand of the delegates of the O.W.S.A. at the National Con-
vention in December.

The National is a great and most valuable institution.
It ought to be a permanent part of the life of the the nation
even after enfranchisement is won. The C.U. is a temporary or-
ganization, formed for one single purpose, and is in no way com-
parable with the National. The National is far greater than its
present administration or its present policies; and the most loy-
al members of the National must desire and work strenuously for
changes, if they deem such changes essential for the preservation
of the position and leadership of the National. For this reason
we are anxious to bring the subject to the attention of Ohio suf-
fragists. Will you give us an opportunity of explaining the po-

tion further? We very much desire to present our views concern-
ing it before we hold our State Annual Convention in November.
We shall be glad to send a speaker to any meeting of your League,
or to any group of suffragists; for it is our strong conviction
that if only we can all pull together we can secure nation-wide
suffrage within the next three or four years.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Harry E. Yancey

[Signature]