

INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall



In Congress, ideas and issues from across the nation are discussed, debated, and acted upon. Petitions, investigations, and Acts of Congress are all instruments of change that can affect the lives of citizens and the direction of the nation.

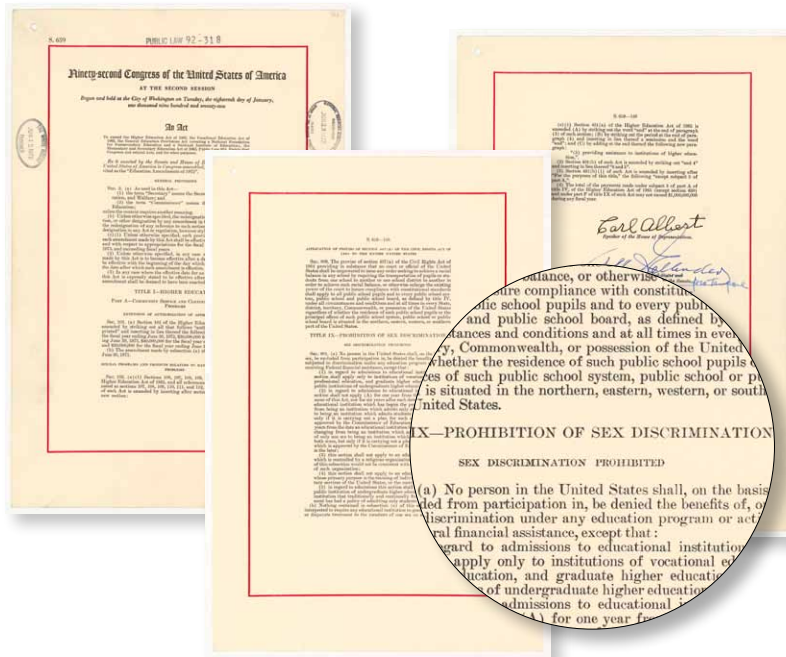
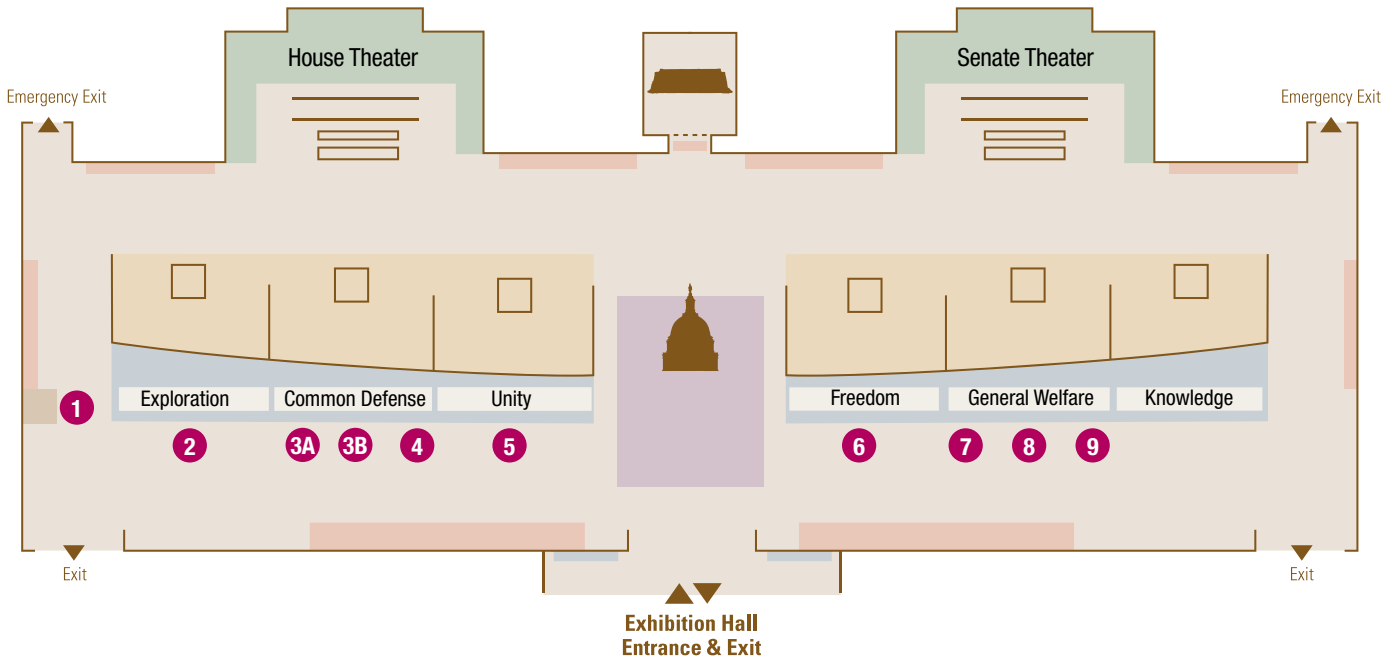


U.S. CAPITOL
www.visitthecapitol.gov

INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall

Currently on display



1 “Title IX” of the Education Amendments of 1972, June 23, 1972

Title IX—part of a larger education act passed by Congress in 1972—prohibits sex discrimination in education programs receiving federal funding. Title IX has helped narrow the gender gap in mathematics, law, and science programs but is most widely credited with increasing opportunities for young women in athletics.

Records of the United States Government, National Archives and Records Administration



2 "Shuttle Explodes,"

Concord Monitor, New Hampshire, January 28, 1986

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded shortly after liftoff, killing all aboard, including high school teacher Christa McAuliffe of Concord, New Hampshire. Congress investigated the disaster and brought about changes in the space program.

Serial and Government Publications Division, Library of Congress

4 Poster, "Be About Peace," December 1976

In 1960 Senator Hubert H. Humphrey and Representative Henry S. Reuss introduced bills concerning a federal volunteer program for service abroad. The next year, President Kennedy established the Peace Corps by Executive Order and Congress recognized it by legislation.

Records of the Peace Corps, National Archives and Records Administration

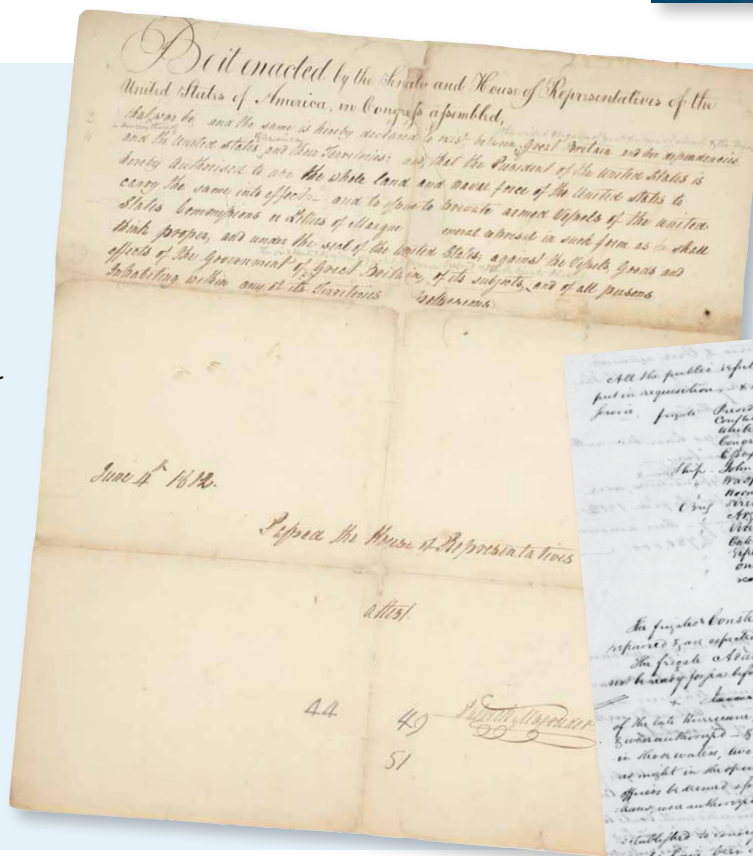


THE WAR OF 1812

Provoked by Britain's refusal to respect the neutrality of United States merchant vessels during its war with France, Congress declared war against Great Britain. British superiority at sea gave it military advantages. Awakened to the need for greater sea power, Congress acted to provide and maintain a stronger navy.

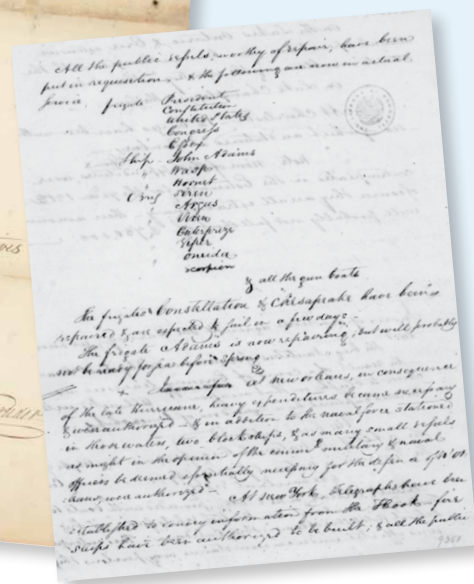
3A House Declaration of War, June 4, 1812, with Senate Amendments, June 17, 1812

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives and Records Administration



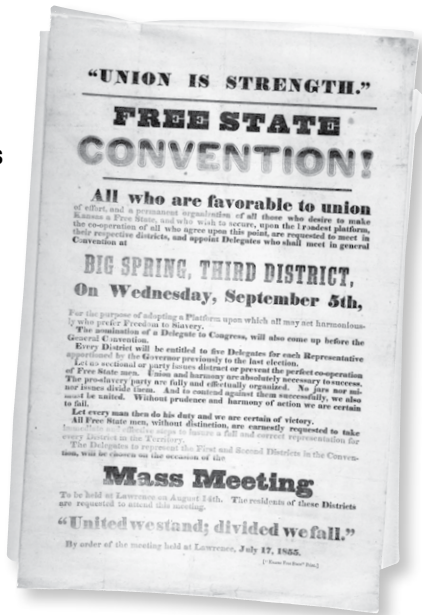
3B List of U.S. Navy vessels in service and lost, 1812

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress



5 Broadside poster, "Union Is Strength: Free State Convention!" Kansas Free State Print, 1855

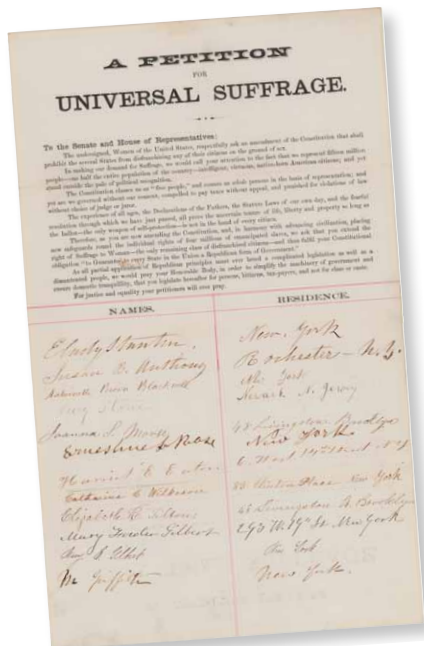
In 1854 Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The act supported states' rights by allowing residents of new territories to decide whether to permit or prohibit slavery. The result was bloody conflict as pro- and anti-slavery forces flocked to Kansas to determine its future.



Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress

6 "A Petition for Universal Suffrage," presented to Congress January 29, 1866

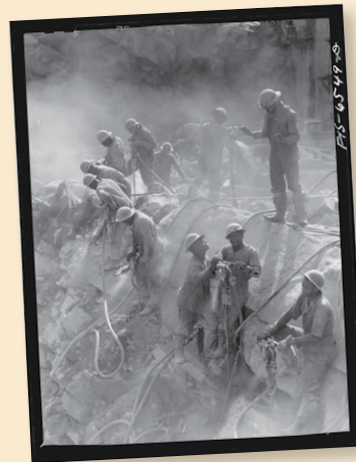
From 1848 at a convention in Seneca Falls, New York, and continuing into the 20th century, several generations of woman suffragists worked tirelessly for the right to vote. Tactics included petitions, parades, public speaking, civil disobedience, imprisonment, and hunger strikes. Women finally achieved suffrage in 1920 with ratification of the 19th Amendment.



Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives and Records Administration

THE NEW DEAL

The Great Depression of the 1930s led to dramatic actions by Congress and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Starting in 1933 and lasting until the start of World War II, new programs and agencies were established in an attempt to initiate economic recovery and improve the lives of citizens.



7 Photograph, Drillers at Fort Loudon Dam, Tennessee (Tennessee Valley Authority), ca. August 1942

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

8 Poster, "Light," Rural Electrification Administration, n.d.

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



9 Poster, "CCC: A Young Man's Opportunity for Work Play Study & Health," ca. 1935

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

A PETITION FOR UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The undersigned, Women of the United States, respectfully ask an amendment of the Constitution that shall prohibit the several States from disfranchising any of their citizens on the ground of sex.

In making our demand for Suffrage, we would call your attention to the fact that we represent fifteen million people—one half the entire population of the country—intelligent, virtuous, native-born American citizens; and yet stand outside the pale of political recognition.

The Constitution classes us as "free people," and counts us *whole* persons in the basis of representation; and yet are we governed without our consent, compelled to pay taxes without appeal, and punished for violations of law without choice of judge or juror.

The experience of all ages, the Declarations of the Fathers, the Statute Laws of our own day, and the fearful revolution through which we have just passed, all prove the uncertain tenure of life, liberty and property so long as the ballot—the only weapon of self-protection—is not in the hand of every citizen.

Therefore, as you are now amending the Constitution, and, in harmony with advancing civilization, placing new safeguards round the individual rights of four millions of emancipated slaves, we ask that you extend the right of Suffrage to Woman—the only remaining class of disfranchised citizens—and thus fulfil your Constitutional obligation "to Guarantee to every State in the Union a Republican form of Government."

As all partial application of Republican principles must ever breed a complicated legislation as well as a discontented people, we would pray your Honorable Body, in order to simplify the machinery of government and ensure domestic tranquillity, that you legislate hereafter for persons, citizens, tax-payers, and not for class or caste.

For justice and equality your petitioners will ever pray.

NAMES.

RESIDENCE.

Eludly Stanton	New York
Susan B. Anthony	Rochester - N.Y.
Antoinette Brown Blackwell	Albany
Lucy Stone	Newark N. Jersey
Joanna S. Morse	48 Livingston. Bro.
Emeshue & Rose	New York
Harriet E. Eaton	6 West 121 St.
Catherine C. Wilkinson	83 Clinton Place
Elizabeth C. Tibbets	48 Livingston St.
Mary Fowler Gilbert	295 W. 19th St. N.Y.
Ann E. Elbert	New York
Mr. Griffith	New York

A Petition for Universal Suffrage

At the end of the Civil War, Congress prepared to extend voting rights to black men. Woman suffragists, many of whom had also worked to abolish slavery, wanted to push Congress to go farther.

Look at the petition for universal suffrage (see number 6 on the map to locate the original document in Exhibition Hall).

Do you recognize any of the people who signed the petition? What arguments does the petition make to justify extending the vote to women? If you had to write this petition, what would you include to support your argument?

"A Petition for Universal Suffrage," presented to Congress January 29, 1866

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives,
National Archives and Records Administration

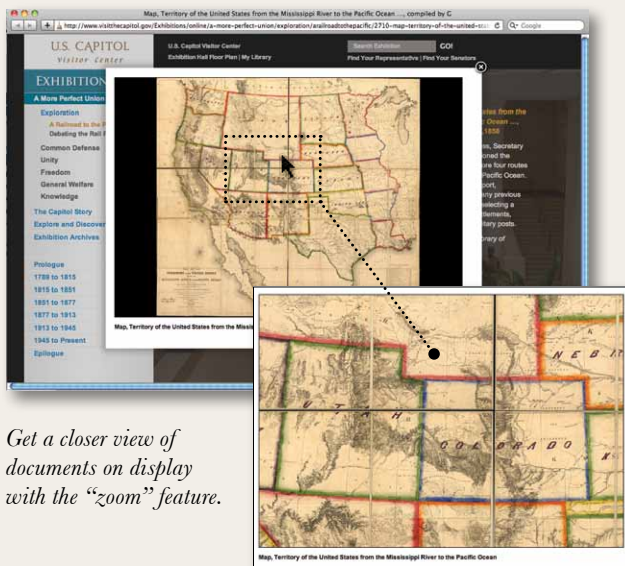
NAMES.

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Exhibition Hall Online

Explore the Capitol Visitor Center's online exhibition. Find out more about the fascinating artifacts and documents in Exhibition Hall that tell the story of the history of Congress and the building of the Capitol at www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions.



Get a closer view of documents on display with the “zoom” feature.

A More Perfect Union

Instruments of Change is part of the exhibit titled “A More Perfect Union,” which illustrates the role of Congress in defining and helping to realize national goals and aspirations. Treasured documents from the National Archives and the Library of Congress trace the journey toward “a more perfect union” through the actions of Congress. The exhibit is arranged in six thematic sections — **Exploration, Common Defense, Unity, Freedom, General Welfare, and Knowledge.**



The United States Capitol is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Saturday. It is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, and Inauguration Day.

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