

### Jane Addams on the Political Role of Urban Women, 1906

It has been well said that the modern city is a stronghold of industrialism quite as the feudal city was a stronghold of militarism, but the modern cities fear no enemies and rivals from without and their problems of government are solely internal. Affairs for the most part are going badly in these great new centres, in which the quickly-congregated population has not yet learned to arrange its affairs satisfactorily. Unsanitary housing, poisonous sewage, contaminated water, infant mortality, the spread of contagion, adulterated food, impure milk, smoke-laden air, ill-ventilated factories, dangerous occupations, juvenile crime, unwholesome crowding, prostitution and drunkenness are the enemies which the modern cities must face and overcome, would they survive. Logically their electorate should be made up of those who can bear a valiant part in this arduous contest, those who in the past have at least attempted to care for children, to clean houses, to prepare foods, to isolate the family from moral dangers; those who have traditionally taken care of that side of life which inevitably becomes the subject of municipal consideration and control as soon as the population is congested. To test the elector's fitness to deal with this situation by his ability to bear arms is absurd. These problems must be solved, if they are solved at all, not from the military point of view, not even from the industrial point of view, but from a third, which is rapidly developing in all the great cities of the world — the human-welfare point of view. . . .

City housekeeping has failed partly because women, the traditional housekeepers, have not been consulted as to its multiform activities. The men have been carelessly indifferent to much of this civic housekeeping, as they have always been indifferent to the details of the household. . . . The very multifariousness and complexity of a city government demand the help of minds accustomed to detail and variety of work, to a sense of obligation for the health and welfare of young children and to a responsibility for the cleanliness and comfort of other people. Because all these things have traditionally been in the hands of women, if they take no part in them now they are not only missing the education which the natural participation in civic life would bring to them but they are losing what they have always had.

### A Working Woman Explains Why She Wants the Vote, 1911

"We are the homeless ones. We spend our lives in other people's homes, cooking the food in other people's kitchens, sweeping and dusting in other people's parlors, and incidentally rocking the cradles of other people's children. Yet we, too, are human beings, and we, too, have our needs like other women.

"When they passed the eight-hour law they left us out. I don't suppose any Senator would think of including the so-called 'servant girl.' I wanted to write and ask for an amendment to put us in, but then I was afraid it might wreck the whole bill, and I wanted other working women to have that great happiness, even if we couldn't have it ourselves. So you see, we, too, have souls. But now, at last, we will have the power to help ourselves, for, thank God, we will be able to vote. The despised 'servant girl' will also be a citizen."

### Mary Ritter Beard Defends the Place of the Congressional Union in the Suffrage Movement, 1916

The Congressional Union claims a distinct and vital place in the suffrage movement for two reasons: (1) because it works solely for the Federal amendment, and (2) because it works politically.

The Congressional Union works only for the Federal amendment because it considers that a quicker, more economical and more certain way of securing an extension of suffrage in the United States. It does not believe that state and national work go hand in hand necessarily. Each successive failure to win in a campaign state increases the obstacles in the way of a Federal amendment. State work does not, therefore, inevitably promote a Federal amendment. . . .

An organization that is working for the Federal and state amendments at the same time will find that one or the other holds its major interest and gets the bulk of its money. It is easily surmised where that major interest will lie. One phase of the work will lag behind, and if the referendum loses one time, its second trial must absorb still more of the attention and energy and money of its supporters.

The Congressional Union, therefore, refuses to attempt to work for the two things. It chooses the Federal way exclusively at this moment because it believes that there is an extraordinary political situation which justifies that course. It chooses the Federal way, too, because it wishes to save women's time, money and nervous strength. The Federal way has other advantages: a progressive education, for suffragists, in politics and government; a broadening of the mental horizon from local to National issues; a concerted and intelligent move on the part of women throughout the country; and an opponent who is a responsible representative voting in the open. . . .

The Congressional Union, moreover, works to secure favorable action in Congress by political pressure. That also represents to it excellent chances of victory coupled with economy and dignity of effort. President Cleveland was elected by 1,049 votes; President Wilson by a little over two million votes. There are some four million possible women's votes in this crisis we are facing. Disfranchised women do not have to argue, plead or cajole if enfranchised women will but vote under the slogan: "SUFFRAGE FIRST!" Some of them may not. It is not essential that they all do. It is essential that many do and enough will. . . .

The Congressional Union believes the Federal amendment can be ratified by enough states. It has taken that matter into consideration as a vital part of its emphasis upon the Federal way. It is not a band of dreamers or youthful fanatics.

All sorts of objections are raised against the policies of the Congressional Union, naturally. Enthusiasts of the state referendum place their hope of victory in education and its "ultimate" triumph over selfish economic and political interests. They may be content with a progressive vote. Education is their real aim, and not suffrage first. . . .

Enthusiasts of the Federal way place their hope of victory in immediate political necessities which strengthen all the older and more abstract appeals by women. They are willing to get the vote through representatives of the "people" and let the vote itself educate.