

# STATE of WISCONSIN



## OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

# Proclamation

*WHEREAS*; on July 11, 1921, Governor John Blaine signed the 1921 Wisconsin Equal Rights Act—formally Wisconsin Statute § 766.97—into law, which provided that “women shall have the same rights and privileges under the law as men in the exercise of ... holding office”; and

*WHEREAS*; this new law officially granted women in our state the right to hold any public office and was the first equal rights bill of its kind to be adopted by any U.S. state, further solidifying Wisconsin’s role as a national leader on women’s rights issues, after having been the first state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment two years earlier; and

*WHEREAS*; prior to the 1921 Wisconsin Equal Rights Act, women in our state had been barred from any elected or appointed public office—except for school boards, where state legislation had allowed women to serve since the 1860s—but by 1923, Wisconsin had recorded its first female mayor and county board supervisor, along with numerous city council members, village trustees, and other local elected and appointed offices; and

*WHEREAS*; while we celebrate that now, a century later, there are more than 3,000 women holding elected office across Wisconsin, we recognize that there is still much work to be done; and

*WHEREAS*; women make up 50 percent of Wisconsin’s population, but hold less than 30 percent of state and local elected offices and only about 12 percent of elected leadership positions, and women of color in our state face an even larger representation gap across state and local offices, accounting for just eight percent of state legislators; and


*WHEREAS*; today, the state of Wisconsin celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1921 Wisconsin Equal Rights Act and reaffirms its commitment to empowering and uplifting women across our state to hold elected and appointed public office for generations to come;

*NOW, THEREFORE*, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin,  
do hereby proclaim July 11, 2021, as the


## CENTENNIAL OF WISCONSIN WOMEN IN PUBLIC OFFICE

throughout the State of Wisconsin and I commend this observance  
to all our state’s residents.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have  
hereunto set my hand and caused the  
Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin  
to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in  
the City of Madison this 9<sup>th</sup> day of  
July 2021.

  
TONY EVERS  
GOVERNOR

By the Governor

  
DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE  
Secretary of State