

**Written Testimony of Bernadette Cahill  
in Support of HB2650 –  
Designating February 15 as Susan B. Anthony Day**

I am making this submission in support of Susan B. Anthony day as the author of three books on votes for women, the most recent of which, "No Vote for Women: The Denial of Suffrage During Reconstruction," concentrates to a great extent on the 1867 suffrage referendum campaign, of which Susan B. Anthony was a leader. The following anecdote strengthens the claim for special recognition for Anthony in Kansas, as she was living and working on equality in Leavenworth in 1865. The most significant piece of information I found was Anthony's speech in Ottumwa, Coffey County, on July 4, 1865, wherein she called for votes for black men, but added that "so-called 'universal suffrage' in its new, contrived meaning of male suffrage only was unsustainable:

*When I speak of the inalienable rights of the negro, I do not forget that these belong equally to woman. Though the government shall be reconstructed on the basis of universal manhood suffrage, it yet will not be a true republic. Still one-half of the people will be in subjection to the other half, and the time will surely come when the whole question will have to be reopened and an accounting made with this other subject class. There will have to be virtually another reconstruction, based on the duty of the national government to guarantee to every citizen the right of self-protection, and this right, for woman as for man, is vested in the ballot."*

To my knowledge, this was the first time such a public call was made in the United States during Reconstruction - perhaps signified when local Republicans berated Anthony for her stand and pressured her to leave out this section in the printed version of the speech. When she spoke that August in Leavenworth, they again pressured her to leave it out.

Anthony made her call for the inclusion of women only a short time after the "men-only" vote policy had been called for and established in Washington, D.C. While easterners were well aware of the policy and wrote about it, it seems that no public speech about women's simultaneous inclusion was made before Anthony took her stand that July 4, 1865. Soon Anthony left Leavenworth, heading home to begin the campaign for women's inclusion in Reconstruction.

In the 1860s, despite this call made by Anthony in Ottumwa - followed up by several major campaigns by women for the right to vote, including the 1867 campaign - only men were given the right and women were left to fight for another 52 years to win it, against all odds.

It seems to me, therefore, that Kansas deserves to recognize Anthony, in addition to so many other things, for making the very first votes-for-women call after the Civil War in Kansas.

Please note that I will be speaking about Anthony and the Reconstruction campaigns in Leavenworth on May 22.

*Bernadette Cahill*

*Vicksburg, Mississippi*

318-614-8444

