# United States History

**Second Wave Feminism: From Primary Source to Poster**

Directions: Read this source carefully and try to get a sense of what second wave feminists want. Then, pick an important idea from the second wave feminist movement and make a sign that feminists could parade with. Make sure your sign includes a slogan that would indicate what feminists want. Illustrate the sign if you have time.

## Women’s Action Alliance Agenda, 1975

Women want:

Enforcement of legislation prohibiting discrimination at all levels of employment.

Extension of the basic workers’ benefits to household workers, migrant and agricultural workers, and homemakers.

Economic and legal recognition of homemakers’ work.

Recognition of pregnancy related disabilities as normal, temporary employment disabilities.

Attainment of equal pay for comparable work, that is, work frequently performed by women which is equivalent to work performed by men, but for which women receive less pay.

Review of widely used industrial designs and machinery which inhibit women’s work production.

Creation of a comprehensive system of child care which includes parent involvement; child care as a tax deductible business expense.

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## National Organization for Women, Statement of Purpose, 1966

Further, with higher education increasingly essential in today's society, too few women are entering and finishing college or going on to graduate or professional school. Today, women earn only one in three of the B.A.'s and M.A.'s granted, and one in ten of the Ph.D.'s.

In all the professions considered of importance to society, and in the executive ranks of industry and government, women are losing ground. Where they are present it is only a token handful. Women comprise less than 1% of federal judges; less than 4% of all lawyers; 7% of doctors. Yet women represent 51% of the U.S. population. And, increasingly, men are replacing women in the top positions in secondary and elementary schools, in social work, and in libraries -- once thought to be women's fields.

WE DO NOT ACCEPT the token appointment of a few women to high-level positions in government and industry as a substitute for serious continuing effort to recruit and advance women according to their individual abilities. To this end, we urge American government and industry to mobilize the same resources of ingenuity and command with which they have solved problems of far greater difficulty than those now impeding the progress of women.

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## Citizens’ Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1970

The proposed equal rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution would provide that “Equality of Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex” and would authorize the “Congress and the State to enforcement the amendment by appropriate legislation.”

The purpose of the proposed amendment would be to provide constitutional protection against laws and official practices that treat men and women differently. Numerous distinctions based on sex still exist in the law. For example:

1. State laws placing special restrictions on women with respect to hours of work and weightlifting on the job;
2. Dual pay schedules for men and women public school teachers;
3. State laws that provide that the father is the natural guardian of the minor children;
4. Heavier criminal penalties for female offenders than for male offenders committing the same crime

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## Redstockings Manifesto, 1969

2. Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men’s lives. Our humanity is denied. Our prescribed behavior is enforced by the threat of physical violence.

3. We identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male supremacy: men dominate women, a few men dominate the rest. All power structures throughout history have been male-dominated and male-oriented. Men have controlled all political, economic and cultural institutions and backed up this control with physical force. They have used their power to keep women in an inferior position. All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women.

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## No More Miss America, 1968

We Protest:

1. *The Degrading Mindless-Boob-Girlie Symbol.* The Pageant contestants epitomize the roles we are all forced to play as women. So are women in our society forced daily to compete for male approval, enslaved by ludicrous "beauty" standards we ourselves are conditioned to take seriously.
2. *Racism with Roses.* Since its inception in 1921, the Pageant has not had one Black finalist, and this has not been for a lack of test-case contestants. There has never been a Puerto Rican, Alaskan, Hawaiian, or Mexican-American winner. Nor has there ever been a *true* Miss America- an American Indian.
3. *Miss America as Military Death Mascot.* The highlight of her reign each year is a cheerleader-tour of American troops abroad- last year she went to Vietnam to pep-talk our husbands, fathers, sons and boyfriends into dying and killing with a better spirit.
4. *The Consumer Con-Game.* Miss America is a walking commercial for the Pageant's sponsors. Wind her up and she plugs your product on promotion tours and TV-all in an "honest, objective" endorsement.
5. *Competition Rigged and Unrigged.* We deplore the encouragement of an American myth that oppresses men as well as women: the win-or-you’re-worthless competitive disease. The "beauty contest" creates only one winner to be *"*used*"* and forty-nine losers who are "useless."

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## Barbara Susan Kaminsky’s Testimony on Abortion, 1973

I became pregnant. I had incomplete knowledge of contraception. I was sane

and healthy, therefore ineligible for a legal abortion. Not being criminal or sophisticated I had no access to illegal means of abortion. I asked my mother for money to cover the cost of a trip to Japan where abortion was legal. She was not wealthy. She refused. She became hysterical. I became hysterical. Twenty-four hours later I was married. Eight months later I was delivered of an infant. Shortly afterwards the child was adopted and my marriage dissolved.

When I tried to take control of my life (have an abortion), I faced opposition.

The state was on the side of the opposition. I feel it is unconstitutional for the state to have taken any position in relation to the moral and emotional way in which I chose to conduct my life. The state should compensate me for the emotional ordeal it put me through. Moreover, the state should be made to support me while I finish my education.

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## National Organization for Women, Statement of Purpose 1966

WE BELIEVE that it is as essential for every girl to be educated to her full potential of human ability as it is for every boy -- with the knowledge that such education is the key to effective participation in today's economy and that, for a girl as for a boy, education can only be serious where there is expectation that it will be used in society. We believe that American educators are capable of devising means of imparting such expectations to girl students. Moreover, we consider the decline in the proportion of women receiving higher and professional education to be evidence of discrimination. This discrimination may take the form of quotas against the admission of women to colleges, and professional schools; lack of encouragement by parents, counselors and educators; denial of loans or fellowships; or the traditional or arbitrary procedures in graduate and professional training geared in terms of men, which inadvertently discriminate against women. We believe that the same serious attention must be given to high school dropouts who are girls as to boys.

WE REJECT the current assumptions that a man must carry the sole burden of supporting himself, his wife, and family, and that a woman is automatically entitled to lifelong support by a man upon her marriage, or that marriage, home and family are primarily woman's world and responsibility -- hers, to dominate -- his to support. We believe that a true partnership between the sexes demands a different concept of marriage, an equitable sharing of the responsibilities of home and children and of the economic burdens of their support. We believe that proper recognition should be given to the economic and social value of homemaking and child-care.

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## Mary King on the Position of Women in SNCC, 1964

The woman in SNCC is often in the same position as that token Negro hired in a corporation. The management thinks that it has done its bit.

It needs to be made known that many women in the movement are not "happy and contented" with their status. It needs to be made known that much talent and experience are being wasted by this movement, when women are not given jobs commensurate with their abilities. It needs to be known that just as Negroes were the crucial factor in the economy of the cotton South, so too in SNCC, women are the crucial factor that keeps the movement running on a day-to-day basis. Yet they are not given equal say-so when it comes to day-to-day decision making.

1. Although there are women in the Mississippi project who have been working as long as some of the men, the leadership group is all men.
2. One of SNCC’s main administrative officers apologized for appointment of a woman as interim project director.
3. A veteran of two years work for SNCC reports that she spends her day typing and doing clerical work for other people in her project.
4. Any woman in SNCC, no matter what her position or experience, has been asked to take minutes in a meeting when she and other women are outnumbered by men.
5. Capable, responsible and experienced women who are in leadership positions can expect to have to defer to a man on their project for final decision making.

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## If Men Could Menstruate, Gloria Steinem, 1986

So what would happen if suddenly, magically, men could menstruate and women could not?

Clearly, menstruation would become an enviable, worthy, masculine event:

Men would brag about how long and how much.

Young boys would talk about it as the envied beginning of manhood. Gifts, religious ceremonies, family dinners, and stag parties would mark the day.

To prevent monthly work loss among the powerful, Congress would fund a National Institute of Dysmenorrhea. Sanitary supplies would be federally funded and free. Of course, some men would still pay for the prestige of such commercial brands as Paul Newman Tampons, Muhammad Ali's Rope-a-Dope Pads, John Wayne Maxi Pads, and Joe Namath Jock Shields- "For Those Light Bachelor Days."

Statistical surveys would show that men did better in sports and won more Olympic medals during their periods.

Generals, right-wing politicians, and religious fundamentalists would cite menstruation ("*men*-struation") as proof that only men could serve God and country in combat ("You have to give blood to take blood"), occupy high political office ("Can women be properly fierce without a monthly cycle governed by the planet Mars?"), be priests, ministers, God Himself ("He gave this blood for our sins"), or rabbis ("Without a monthly purge of impurities, women are unclean").