



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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### **The YWCA Encourages Women to Get Out and Vote**

*"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." -- Amendment XIX, U.S. Constitution*

**PHOENIX – (October 30, 2008)...** YWCA Maricopa County encourages the community to – Make your great-grandmother, grandmother and mother proud – get out and vote on November 4! At a time when many people take for granted their right to vote, the YWCA calls on the community to remember the effort and sacrifice that was made to give every citizen the right to participate in the political process of electing our leaders and is encouraged that this election will spark more women (and men) to vote.

The progress women have made has come about because of their most fundamental demand to be treated as full citizens and allowed the right to be involved in their government. Eighty-eight years ago, Congress ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote. Today it is hardly imaginable, such a fundamental right being denied to our great-grandmother, grandmothers, mothers, wives, and daughters. Yet many of the women who will be voting on November 4<sup>th</sup> were born in an era when their grandmothers or mothers were disfranchised in most states as a matter of law.

That era ended with the adoption of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. No other act of Congress has expanded the right to vote to more Americans—and—few other acts have reshaped American politics so dramatically. Since 1920, the influence of women in all areas of American life—political, social, and economic—has flourished, and it all began with the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The YWCA celebrates this turning point in American history by encouraging the community to exercising their right to vote on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The struggle to give women the right to full participation in American democracy has profoundly altered American society.

Dana Campbell Saylor, CEO of the YWCA Maricopa County said, “Bestowing upon women voting equality set free the talents of half of our citizens in more ways than could have been anticipated. It provided us with a much needed perspective on how this country could be run, and the course to be charted. It is imperative we recognize and honor the brave women who did everything in their power to secure their right to vote. They empowered themselves not just for their moment, but for all women.”

#### Women Voting

Typically, more women vote than do men and that’s true in almost every election. It's not only because women outnumber men; it's that women are more likely to vote. However, after nearly a

century after women were given the right to vote, the number of women participating in elections has decreased at the national and local levels. Only 60.1% of women voted in the 2004 presidential election, a slight drop from the 67% of women voters in the 1964 presidential election, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In the 2006 congressional elections, only 44.7% of women voted, compared with 53% in 1966.

But the number of men voting has decreased during the same period, too. Only 56.3% of men voted in 2004 compared with 71.9% in 1964. And in the 2006 congressional elections, only 42.5% of men voted, compared with 58.2% in 1966.

### **About YWCA Maricopa County, Local – National – International**

The YWCA Maricopa County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has served the Phoenix metropolitan area since 1912. Locally as well as worldwide the YWCA develops opportunities for women's growth in leadership and justice to achieve human rights, dignity, freedom, health, security and peace for all people.

The YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization worldwide with more than 25 million members in 122 countries, including 2 million members in 300 local associations in the United States. For more information on Maricopa County's YWCA visit [www.ywcaaz.org](http://www.ywcaaz.org) or call (602)258-0990, Washington D.C. YWCA U.S.A. [www.ywca.org](http://www.ywca.org) and World YWCA Geneva, Switzerland [www.worldywca.info](http://www.worldywca.info).

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