

Clinton Library Gets 19th Amendment For A Limited Time

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Sisters visit exhibit. From l to r: Marlene Bokker, Jayne Ducat, and Gayle Weber. Photo by: Malcolm Glover



Kathleen Pate next to the 19th Amendment display case. Photo by: Malcolm Glover



Visitors tour the exhibit.



The exhibit at the Clinton Library.

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An historic document that granted women the right to vote in the United States will soon be on display for a limited time at the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock. The document is on loan from the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

As library visitors meander through a maze of artifacts once owned by two women whose lives had an impact on the presidential center's namesake, these same visitors soon catch a glimpse of a glass display case containing a replica of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Kathleen Pate, the library's education specialist, says the reproduction will be removed to make room for the original so members of the public can view it starting October 19th.

"As a presidential library, we are a part of the National Archives. [To display the document, archives officials] have to come down [to the Clinton Library], they also measure light levels and humidity levels," said Pate. "Someone will be flying on a plane with the document... it doesn't get packed in a suitcase or a crate. They have to have hands on the document the whole time. They will deliver it to us on Thursday, it will be placed in the case, and then the public can come and see it starting Friday morning when we open up at 9 o'clock."

Pate admits even though the document had an enormous impact on history its length is pretty brief.

"The amendment itself is about two sentences. '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.' And then the second sentence says that 'Congress shall have the power to enforce the article by appropriate legislation,'" recites Pate, while staring at the replica.

Pate says the amendment will be on hand for six days and housed in the temporary exhibit dedicated to the memory of President Bill Clinton's mother Virginia Clinton Kelley and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's mother Dorothy Howell Rodham.

"Rodham was born on the day that the 19th Amendment was ratified June 4, 1919," said Pate. "She lived to see her daughter become the third female secretary of state so you see this tremendous change."

Four sisters from Illinois enter the exhibit.

"I'm 72, so I remember a lot of changes with women," said Jayne Ducat.

Ducat said strolling through the exhibit with her sisters Gayle, Marlene, and June was an emotional experience.

"I'm sometimes disappointed that young people don't seem to realize the importance of it. When I hear that they're not going to vote it's like... I'm sorry this exhibit makes you a little emotional... I think we go back to remembering our mothers and grandmothers that passed," said Ducat, as she tried to hold back tears. "As far as the amendment, yes, I'm very glad they passed it."

While perusing through other artifacts, 71-year old Marlene Bokker is at a loss for words.

"I just thought it was very interesting," said Bokker.

Gayle Weber is 73 years old. She passes by the display case containing the amendment replica and immediately has fond memories of her mother.

"My mother was born in 1914, so of course that was before the Women's Suffrage Movement and I know the deciding vote to pass the amendment was from a son for his mother," said Weber. "Many things that I saw and heard reminded me of my mother and how positive she was."

Clinton Library education specialist Kathleen Pate says this is the perfect time to bring the document to Arkansas.

"This being an election year, we felt like it was a great opportunity to kind of tie-in the roles of women, how they've evolved over time, and the significance of the 19th Amendment," Pate said. "We're hoping that [the display] will encourage women of all ages, you know 18 and up, to get and vote."

The original 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote, will be on display at the Clinton

Presidential Library from Friday, Oct.19th through Wed, Oct. 24th.

Attachments

