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## NY honored as 'cradle of women's rights'

By CASSANDRA HAMDAN

July 01, 2013

Legislators passed a resolution to honor the centennial of the woman's suffrage campaign by designating July 1, 2013 as the "Spirit of 1776" Wagon Day in New York.

The Spirit of 1776 is the wagon associated with activists Edna Kearns, Irene Davison, and eight-year-old Serena Kearns who, one hundred years ago on July 1, 1913, left Manhattan from the headquarters of the state's Woman Suffrage Association and headed to Long Island in the horse-drawn wagon. They spent the next month organizing in many communities to gather support for women voting. The wagon and its journey was covered by many New York City and Long Island newspapers.

The passing of the resolution connects the wagon to current policies and cultural tourism development. "The 'Spirit of 1776' suffrage campaign wagon is a powerful historic symbol reminding us all of the new frontier that was traveled and conquered by brave and determined women to whom we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude," said Senator Betty Little, R-Queensbury, the resolution's sponsor and chair of the Senate Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks, and Recreation Committee.

The legislative resolution would also urge the state to complete the upstate Women's Heritage Trail, an extensive trail commemorating the birthplace of the women's suffrage movement and the preservation of key historic homes related to the 72-year campaign that granted women the right to vote.

"When we talk about the abolition movement, women's suffrage and the advancement of women in the workplace, New York is at the very heart of that tapestry," said Deborah Hughes, president and CEO of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum, the historic memorial home of the women's rights leader. "What started as a movement years ago is still relevant and important to women all over the world."

Among the many legislators and supporters, was Votes for Women 2020, a nonprofit corporation created to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage. The organization has taken on planning suffrage centennial events for 2017, commemorating New York for winning the vote in 1917, and the 2020 anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment.

"As New Yorkers we have a special place in history," said Susan Zimet, founder and president of Votes for Women 2020. "New York's



State legislators stand with members of the advocacy group Votes for Women 2020. The organization is a main supporter of a legislative resolution to honor the woman's suffrage campaign by designating July 1, 2013 as the "Spirit of 1776" Wagon Day. The legislative resolution would also urge the state to complete the upstate Women's Heritage Trail, an extensive trail commemorating the birthplace of the women's suffrage movement and the preservation of key historic homes related to the 72-year campaign that granted women the right to vote. Photo by Dan Mosher.

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women led the way from Seneca Falls to the Supreme Court. The importance of the work of these brave warriors who paved the way for myself and my daughter are unsung heroes who deserve to have their proper place in history."

The resolution would bring an influx of cultural tourism as well as political and social awareness to the area.

"New York led America in extending the vote to women. It's an honor for us to mark the centennial of the 'Spirit of 1776' wagon and to salute some of the crusading pioneers who helped us galvanize the nation to adopt the 19th Amendment to the constitution," said Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, D-Maspeth, chair of the Assembly Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development Committee.

"All of the women here today have a special bond. We share a lineage that can be traced to our ancestors who fought for this movement. The history we're celebrating today is actually her story. We want our grandchildren to know about the movement that secured women the right to vote," Little said.

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