

TENNESSEE BLUE BOOK 2019-2020



TRE HARGETT
Secretary of State



19TH AMENDMENT
WOMAN SUFFRAGE
BY
ALAN LEQUIRE 1997

State of Tennessee



The Secretary of State

State Capitol

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My Fellow Tennesseans,

On behalf of the State of Tennessee, it is my privilege to dedicate this year's edition of the *2019-2020 Tennessee Blue Book* to the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Tennessee's role is of particular significance in the women's suffrage movement. Thirty-five states had already ratified the amendment, and all others except Tennessee had voted against ratification or refused to call a special session for consideration of the amendment. When Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify, supporters of women's suffrage finally gained the necessary number of states required to pass the 19th Amendment.

With 2020 marking the centennial of Tennessee's passage of the 19th Amendment, the cover for this biennial book is yellow, which represents the color of the roses worn by the supporters of women's suffrage. The yellow cover will be a great way to commemorate Tennessee's celebration for generations to come.

On the following pages, you will read more about the events that led up to the 19th Amendment's passage in Tennessee and therefore nationally. I hope you will take time to read these pages, and perhaps be inspired to do more research in other sources. It will help you better appreciate the difficult path to winning this victory for women.

I encourage you to reflect not only on the women's suffrage movement but also to think about your own participation in elections. The most fundamental manner in which we can participate in our form of government is by voting for our local, state, and federal leaders. Our vote is a significant method of making our hopes, dreams, and desires known to those in leadership. It is how we hold our government accountable.

Honor not only these women, but all Tennesseans by being an engaged citizen and using your right to vote to make a positive difference in the future of our great state and nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tre Hargett".

Tre Hargett

100 YEARS OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE

In the summer of 1920, Tennessee became the epicenter for the movement to grant women the right to vote. In June 1919, Congress sent the 19th Amendment, which granted full suffrage to American women, to the states for ratification. The long fight for a constitutional amendment on woman suffrage had achieved an important victory, but was not over yet. To become law, the amendment would have to be ratified by thirty-six of the forty-eight states. Thirty-five states had ratified the amendment by June 1920, and with most of the remaining states having already taken hard stances against it, suffragists turned their attention to the Volunteer State. In order to complete ratification in time for the November presidential elections, they would have to convince Governor Albert H. Roberts to call a special session of the legislature. Suffrage supporters from all over the country began a letter-writing campaign to the governor, which included telegrams from national suffrage leaders as well as President Woodrow Wilson. Roberts finally acquiesced on August 7, 1920, formally calling for a special session of the Tennessee General Assembly to convene on August 9.

Both suffragists and anti-suffragists established headquarters in the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, the former led by National American Woman Suffrage Association president Carrie Chapman Catt and the latter led by Josephine



Women march for the right to vote in a Nashville parade for women's suffrage. Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Pearson, the president of the Tennessee State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Opponents of the 19th Amendment argued that it would violate states' rights, threaten traditional roles for women, and upset existing race relations by enfranchising black women. Meanwhile, members of the liquor and manufacturing industries feared the effect women-backed legislation (such as prohibition and child labor regulations) would have on their profits. Both sides accused the other of impropriety and bribery as they furiously lobbied legislators.

When the legislature met on August 9, it took only a few days for the Senate to pass the amendment. The true trial lay ahead. The House, led by Speaker Seth Walker (an opponent of woman suffrage), delayed consideration of the amendment until August 17, but ended the debate with a motion to adjourn the next day, carried by a vote of 52-44. Suffragists felt their grip slipping, but the vote was still too close to call.

The next day, the House continued its debate. Legislators, lobbyists, and activists flooded the State Capitol to answer one question: should women have the right to vote? Controversy over women's voting rights had brewed steadily since 1848 but reached its boiling point that sweltering day in August with advocates for woman suffrage donning yellow roses and their opponents wearing red roses. As the legislators took their places on the House floor, the audience tallied the yellow and red roses

on their lapels in an attempt to predict the outcome of the vote. A sea of red seemed to spell doom for the suffragists. They could only count on 47 votes in their favor, leaving 49 votes for the opposition. Harry T. Burn, a freshman legislator from Niota, arrived with a red rose pinned to his lapel and a letter tucked into his pocket. He had previously shown support for woman suffrage, but voted to table the amendment in an attempt to delay its consideration until after the November elections. The motion to table, however, failed when Representative Banks Turner, of Yorkville, voted against it. Confident that the amendment itself would fail, Speaker Walker called for a vote on the original motion to ratify.

The vote again came around to Harry Burn. The twenty-four-year-old legislator shocked the entire House chamber when he voted "Aye." With his and Turner's votes, the resolution carried 49-47. In an attempt at political maneuvering, Speaker Seth Walker changed his vote to "Aye," to force reconsideration of the resolution, but his strategy failed, and the resolution passed with a final vote of 50-46. With the vote so close, why did Representative Burn decide to vote in favor of suffrage? The letter tucked into his pocket had weighed heavily on his mind. Written by his mother, Febb Ensminger Burn, the letter urged him: "Hurrah and vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt." Her support gave him the last bit of courage needed to take a stand and turn the tide. Despite attempts by the opposition to challenge the constitutionality of the 19th Amendment on a technicality, the ratification stood and woman suffrage became the law of the land on August 26, 1920. As the thirty-sixth state needed to ratify, Tennessee earned itself the nickname "The Perfect 36," and that democratic legacy lives on through the participation and service of Tennessee women at all levels of government. — *Patricia Mitchell, Tennessee State Library and Archives*



Harry T. Burn, Republican member of the Tennessee House of Representatives from Niota, in McMinn County, provided the 49th vote in favor of ratification. Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.



This photograph from the "Ratification Issue" of the Nashville Tennessean, Sunday morning, August 29, 1920, depicts the Senate chamber at the moment that the clerk counted the historic vote on woman suffrage. Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.



Tennessee Blue Book 2019–2020

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Preface

The *Tennessee Blue Book* serves as a manual of useful information on our state and government, both past and present. It contains information on the makeup of Tennessee state government, state history, national and state constitutions, most recent election results, and census data.

The *Blue Book* is divided into eight sections. The first three sections are devoted to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, also referred to as departments in the Tennessee Constitution. They appear in the order set forth by the state constitution. The book's organization is based on the organizational chart of state government, which appears on the following pages.

Section I focuses on the 111th General Assembly, listing the membership of the Senate and House of Representatives and their committees. The General Assembly examines issues affecting Tennesseans and gives guidance necessary for the smooth operation of state government. The General Assembly elects three constitutional officers: the secretary of state, the comptroller of the treasury, and the treasurer. These officials and their departments are featured in this section.

Section II is devoted to the executive branch of government and explains the function of the departments administered by the governor through his appointed commissioners. This section also describes the governor's responsibilities and explores the history and duties of the agencies under his authority.

Section III examines the judicial branch of state government and provides information on the judicial system, courts, and those involved in interpreting state law. The attorney general and reporter is a constitutional officer appointed by the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Section IV features the Tennessee Public Utility Commission and explains its role in advancing the public interest through telecommunications and utilities throughout the state.

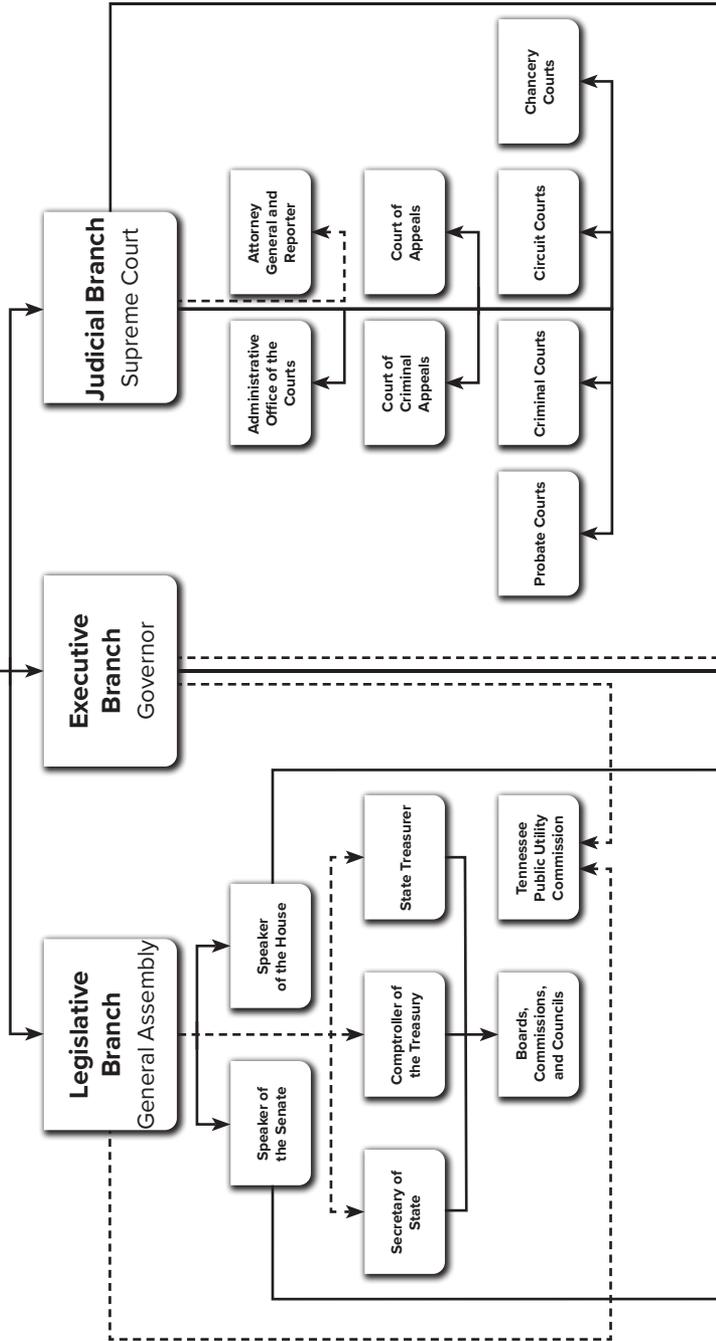
Section V presents the Tennessee congressional delegation in the federal government and the United States Constitution.

Section VI contains a cumulative state history, biographies of Tennessee's former governors, state historic sites, state symbols and honors, and the Tennessee Constitution.

Section VII details the results of elections held across the state in 2018 and provides statistical information regarding Tennessee cities and counties.

Section VIII consists of a topical index and a listing of key illustrations, along with credit and/or source.

The term "blue book" dates from the 15th century, when the English Parliament began keeping its records in large volumes covered with blue velvet. Since that time, the name "Blue Book" has been used to describe many forms of government manuals. The *Tennessee Blue Book and Official Directory* was first published in 1929. Its predecessor, *The Official and Political Manual of the State of Tennessee*, was first published by the Office of the Secretary of State in 1890.



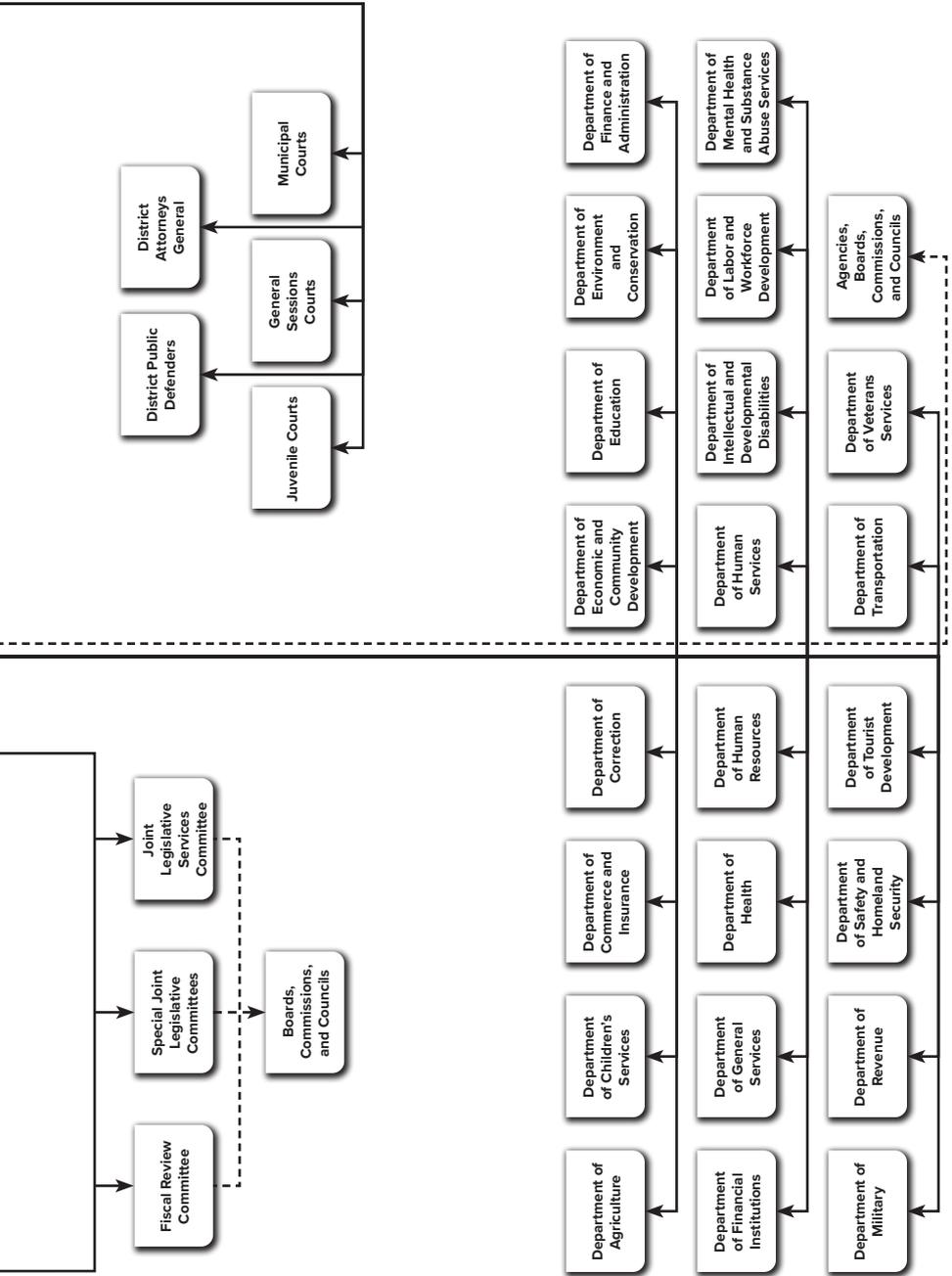


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