

# Alice Paul

1885–1977



Alice Paul in 1915. Paul advocated focusing on a federal amendment over state-by-state efforts.  
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## Quaker Values

Alice Paul was a descendant of Pennsylvania's founder William Penn. Her parents were "Hicksite" Quakers, a group that favored social activism and equality between men and women. As a child Alice attended suffrage events with her mother.

## The National Woman's Party (NWP)

Alice Paul came into conflict with NAWSA (the leading suffrage organization in the U.S.) and its president Carrie Chapman Catt. Paul felt that NAWSA was too conservative in its approach. In 1916 she founded the National Woman's Party to engage in bold and dramatic protest. Paul wanted to embarrass President Wilson personally, and "hold the party in power responsible" - increasing pressure on Wilson by defeating members of his party regardless of their stance on suffrage.

## The Silent Sentinels

Alice Paul and the NWP picketed the White House, the first such protests in American history. Picketing six days a week, 2,000 protested during 1917-1919. Of hundreds arrested for "obstructing traffic," many were jailed. Insisting they were political prisoners, some refused food and were force fed. Once Alice Paul, who led the hunger strikes, was confined to a windowless prison psychiatric ward. News of their severe treatment turned public opinion in their favor.



"Silent Sentinels" protest in front of the White House. Some saw this practice as disloyalty during World War I. Others emphasized the contradiction between fighting for democracy abroad while denying votes to women at home. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Alice Paul energized the suffrage movement with a spectacular parade in Washington DC and picketing the White House to pressure President Woodrow Wilson to endorse women's suffrage.

*"Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about simple equality." Alice Paul, 1972*

## Radical Turn

While studying in England she met Emmeline Pankhurst the radical "suffragette" who favored disruptive protest, vandalism, and confrontation with political figures. With fellow American Lucy Burns she joined Pankhurst's Women's Social and Political Union (WPSU) and was arrested and jailed several times. Engaged in hunger strikes, she endured the pain and discomfort of forced feedings. Paul concluded that social work, her intended occupation, was futile without fundamental changes to society including women's suffrage.



Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested in front of Buckingham Palace.  
IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

## ERA

Alice Paul authored the first draft of the Equal Rights Amendment and



Raising a glass of grape juice, Alice Paul celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.  
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## Spectacular Debut

Returning to America, Alice Paul joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and she created and organized the famous woman's suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. on the eve of Woodrow Wilson's inauguration in 1913.



The official program for the 1913 Woman's Suffrage Procession. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS