

Wilmington, Del., Aug. 12, 1919.  
Hon. John G. Townsend, Governor, State of Delaware.

Dear Sir:

An earnest poll of the members of the legislature has revealed to us that while you assert that you are in favor of woman suffrage and a special session of the legislature, your friends and supporters in that legislature, notably Senator Long of Sussex County, have revealed themselves to be, in some instances, not only antagonistic to a special session, but absolutely rude in expression of that antagonism.

It has been the experience in other states, when governors have moved sincerely in these matters and publicly outlined their policies with respect to them, that their political and legislative friends have responded quickly and come to the support of such policies.

Here in Delaware we find ourselves confronted by the anomalous situation of a governor professing to be in favor of the thing and eager for early action, and his closest friends and supporters in the legislature arrayed uncompromisingly and even discourteously against him and insisting upon delay.

We do not think it necessary to remind a person of your intelligence and high official position that such a situation is so unnatural that it cannot fail to give rise to suspicion among and critical comment by friends of suffrage.

We not only regret that such a situation has been revealed by our poll, but also that we should feel it necessary to call your attention to it.

We would remind you that, in the last analysis, the enfranchisement of the 65,000 Delaware women of voting age will not depend upon the action of either the governor of Delaware or the legislature of Delaware. It will come through the votes of the legislatures of other states, no matter what may be the political and other designs against it in this state.

These facts do not, however, alter the broad fundamental fact that the womanhood of this state has a right to look to its own Governor and its own legislature for their own enfranchisement under the Federal amendment.

In view of the refusal of several of your own friends and supporters in the legislature to accept the plan outlined by you with respect to pledges precedent to the calling of a special session, we now respectfully urge you to issue an unconditional call for such session, thereby relieving yourself from all responsibility in the matter and placing that responsibility upon the senators and the representatives who assemble in response to that call.

With 65,000 Delaware women about to be clothed with the voting power, we feel sure you will not care to array that immense voting block against you by refusing this request.

We feel equally sure that when those senators and representatives meet, and the issue is joined in the State House, there will be few of them who will care to jeopardize their political futures and the futures of their parties by placing themselves on record against this act of justice.

In this present instance, however, we are not dealing with the legislature. We will deal with that when we come to it. We are merely dealing with you as Governor of this state, and the one man who must shoulder full responsibility in the matter of whether there shall be or shall not be a special session of that body.

Very respectfully yours,

Marie T. Lockwood,  
Chairman Ratification Campaign Committee

Petition text published in *The Suffragist*, the weekly newspaper of the National Woman's Party.

Jessie Hardy MacKaye, "Campaigning in Delaware with the Granddaughter of a Statesman," *The Suffragist*, 7:34 (August 23, 1919): 7.