

## 6b - A Mother's Advice

*After receiving the approval of the U.S. Congress in 1919, the women's suffrage amendment was sent to the states for ratification. In August of 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to endorse the controversial amendment, and it passed into law.*

*Harry Burn, a young state congressman from Tennessee, had cast the deciding vote. At first, Burn had been uncertain how to vote, but ultimately he gave in to a request from his mother -- a devoted suffragist -- to back the measure.*

*Below are excerpts from a letter that Mrs. J. L. Burn sent to her son before the vote and from her son's statement defending his decision to the Tennessee House of Representatives.*

Hurrah! and vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt. I notice some of the speeches against. They were very bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have noticed nothing yet. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt\* put the 'Rat' in Ratification.

-- Mrs. J. L. Burn to her son



I want to state that I changed my vote in favor of ratification first, because I believe in full suffrage as a right; second, I believe we had a moral and legal right to ratify; third, I knew that a mother's advice is always safest for her boy to follow and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification; fourth, I appreciated the fact that an opportunity such as seldom comes to a mortal man to free seventeen million women from political slavery was mine

-- Congressman Harry Burn to the Tennessee House of Representatives

\* Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

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