

## Civil Dialogue in Utah Suffrage Debates

### 1. March 28, 1895 Jump to e698754

***Note:** The Committee on Elections and the Right of Suffrage shared a report with the suggested wording below for all the delegates to review.*

**Section 1** The rights of citizens of the state of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. Both male and female citizens of this state shall equally enjoy all civil, political and religious rights and privileges.

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| In 1-2 sentences, restate the wording above in your own words. |
| Why do you think this committee report is important?           |

### 2. March 28, 1787 Jump to e698765

***Note:** A delegate proposed amending the committee's language to say only men over 21 who are citizens could vote. Another delegate, named Mr. Roberts (Davis County), supported the change. He was for women's suffrage in principle but opposed it in the Convention. He feared the U.S. Congress would not accept Utah as a state if women had the vote.*

**Mr. Roberts:** [...] I therefore, shall proceed upon that division of my speech that I had prepared on the theory that the adoption of woman suffrage is dangerous to the acquiring of statehood [sic]. [...] I invite their attention to this array of difficulties which confronts the attainment of our statehood, and if I am not altogether mistaken in my conceptions of these difficulties, if the women of this Territory can see that the enfranchisement of them now, the persistence of doing it, will endanger the attainment of our hopes, it will be a movement worthy of the women of this State, if they were willing to petition this honorable body of men not to attempt the enfranchisement of women, if in their judgment it would endanger statehood itself. It is a sacrifice that I believe the women of this Territory are capable of making.

What is Mr. Roberts' stance on women's suffrage in Utah?

One of our vocab words is **advocacy**. How is Mr. Roberts showing advocacy for his opinion?

### 3. **March 28, 1895** Jump to e698770

***Note:** The debate continued about the amendment that only men over 21 years old who are citizens can vote. Mr. Chidester (Garfield County) spoke in favor of women's right to vote. He said when he ran for office, his platform included women's suffrage and it was his duty to fight for it in the convention.*

**Mr. Chidester:** [...] That platform was handed to me and upon that platform I stood. Upon that platform I went to the people. I went to them honestly with it. I had no voice in that Convention, but I said to the chairman that although our county would not be represented, as I was authorized to speak for them, that we would adopt the platform that they adopted and we would endeavor to stand by it. I considered it my duty and it was my duty to appear in that convention and make my fight there. There was the place for me to fight. There was the place for me to oppose this measure; not after I had accepted the nomination on this platform and went to the people and said to them that I had accepted this and if they would elect me that I would labor for those rights and then come here and oppose it.

In 1-2 sentences, restate the wording above in your own words.

One of our vocab words is **listening**. When Mr. Chidester says he went to the people, how does that reflect listening skills?

#### 4. March 28, 1895 Jump to e698770

***Note:** During the debate, some delegates criticized the report from the Committee on Elections and Rights of Suffrage. Mr. Chidester (Garfield County) explained the collaboration process of the committee. He said both the majority and minority on the committee had plenty of time to share their opinions.*

**Mr. Chidester:** It has been stated here this morning that the committee who had that matter in charge had dealt unfairly with the minority of that committee. I wish, Mr. Chairman, to correct it, and I wish to say that it is absolutely untrue; that never was a minority in any committee more fairly dealt with than the minority of that committee, and I say it for this reason, that it was understood from the beginning that there would be some opponents to this measure, and for that reason we agreed to take up that subject on the second day that we met. According to this agreement on the second day that we met, this article was taken up. It was read over, it was talked about, and every member of that committee had perfect freedom to discuss it from that time until we made our report, and the minority determined in the beginning of our sitting that they would make a minority report. The matter, however, was left open for discussion, that the minority might have a chance to discuss it whenever they pleased and to bring out any new points that they might run across. The matter was talked about considerably during our session and the vote remained the same, and towards the last it began to appear to the majority of the committee that it was time that final action should be made upon that, so far as the committee was concerned. The minority had due notice of this, and upon Thursday, I think it was, prior to the handing in of this report, the committee instructed its chairman that he should prepare a report.

In 2-3 sentences, restate the wording above in your own words.

One of our vocab words is **collaboration**. How does making space for majority and minority opinions aid the collaboration process?

5. **March 29, 1895** Jump to e698794

***Note:** The debate continued. Mr. Murdock (Beaver County) said Utah should welcome everyone. This will be how Utah attracts intelligent men and women and will make the state better.*

**Mr. Murdock:** We want what is broad; we want that which is generous; we want what is suitable for all that are here and will come here. I am speaking for myself; I am speaking for those I am representing, and I am speaking for the people of Utah. I am not only speaking for the people that have lived here their life-time and that have been the dominant people here, but I am speaking also for those that have come in since, and that are coming in. I say they are all welcome here and the more that come of intelligent men and women the better Utah will always be for it\_and [sic] her condition will be better. I hope intelligent men and women will come into our midst, and I will say right here, that if I have got a theory of any kind that will not bear the light of day,\_will [sic] not bear investigation, I say let it go. I do not care whether it is politics or religion or anything else, if it will not bear the light of day, I say let it go. That is where I stand. Now, to the suffrage. Why do I want woman suffrage? It is for more reasons than that I am pledged. I am pledged to my constituents. I am pledged by the platform that I stand upon, and I don't propose to move from it. If there is any fault, it is in the people, just as the man that has just taken his seat says; I am on that platform, and I propose to stay there and vindicate that to the best of my ability. I also represent a community that are suffragists. In every community there is a suffragist association, and I want to say that they are to-day able to teach their husbands civil government and national government. They are to-day able to teach many of their neighbors. Why? Because they have put their minds to it.

In 2-3 sentences, restate the wording above in your own words.

One of our vocab words is open-mindedness. How is Mr. Murdock showing **open-mindedness** during the debate on women's suffrage?

### Utah Constitution

***Note:** The proposed change to allow only male citizens over 21 to vote did not pass. Below is the final wording on voting rights in the Utah Constitution.*

The rights of citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. Both male and female citizens of this State shall equally enjoy all civil, political, and religious rights and privileges.

### Prepare for Class Discussion

1. How did civil dialogue in the Utah suffrage debates lead to women getting the vote?
2. Why is civil dialogue essential for self-government?

3. Which civil dialogue skill do you think is the most important: open-mindedness, listening, advocacy, or collaboration? Why?

4. How can we encourage civil dialogue in our everyday lives?