

---

## Congressional Commission on The American Museum of Women's History

21 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202.677.0797  
www.amwh.us

Contact: Dani Mackey (703)283-9698, Dani@DaniMackey.com

### Congressional Commission Delivers Report to Congress Demonstrating the Need and Path Forward for the American Museum of Women's History

Washington, D.C. (Nov. 16, 2016) – Today, a bi-partisan Congressional Commission delivered, on time and on budget, its report to the House and Senate leadership determining the need and path forward for the American Museum of Women's History in our Nation's Capital.

According to the report findings which are based on 18 months of research, analysis and scholarly investigation, a 75,000 to 90,000 square-foot national women's museum should be part of the Smithsonian Institution and be located in a prominent site on or near the National Mall. Funding for the museum should be a public-private partnership, with the majority of the monies raised from the private sector. Construction would begin in 2023, with an opening in 2026.

The Congressional Commission was established to study the potential for a national women's history museum in December 2014 with the bi-partisan co-sponsorship of Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN). The eight members of the Commission were appointed by Congressional leadership, including Speaker John Boehner, Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senator Harry Reid and Senator Mitch McConnell. The members of this bipartisan Commission are Jane Abraham (VA) (Chair), Honorable Marilyn Musgrave (CO), Mary McInnis Boies (NY), Maria Socorro Pesqueira (IL), Bridget Bush (KY), Emily Rafferty (NY), and Pat Mitchell (GA). Commissioner Kathy Wills Wright (VA), upon acceptance of a position with the federal government, was required by federal statute to resign as Commissioner on August 1, 2016.

"I'm proud to have led a bi-partisan team of women who collectively created a plan for a museum designed to be the gateway for connecting and enhancing the full spectrum of American women's history," said Commission Chair Jane Abraham.

#### Topline Report Findings:

- America needs a physical national museum dedicated to showcasing the historical experiences and impact of women in this country. The future museum should be called the American Museum of Women's History.

- The American Museum of Women’s History deserves to be an official part of the Smithsonian Institution to help establish credibility, generate support and boost the number of visitors.
- The museum’s governance structure would follow the guidelines of all Smithsonian museums via the oversight of the Board of Regents, along with the advice, assistance and support, particularly in the area of fundraising, of a dedicated museum Board of Trustees (composition described in the full Commission Report). The Smithsonian’s Board of Regents would be the ultimate governing body.
- The American Museum of Women’s History must be free of charge to the general public.
- The museum will be composed of a strong permanent collection, with supplemental exhibits or objects on loan from other museums/archives, including other components of the Smithsonian.

The plan for the museum calls for the newest digital technologies to tell stories and design spaces for inspiring visitors for generations to come. As part of the report’s development, the Commission:

- Formed an advisory group, composed of scholars, historians and museum practitioners, in order to best identify the content and themes for a future museum. They investigated (a) the core question of whether or not a national women’s history museum is needed in America, (b) what might be the balance between public and scholarly education, and (c) how might the scholarly community lend its support for a future women’s history museum effort;
- Developed a comprehensive set of criteria for choosing a museum location and toured over two dozen potential sites;
- Determined that the Smithsonian should establish a Women’s History Initiative to bring stories of women’s achievements to all its member museums and proposed a pop-up gallery and traveling exhibit to celebrate the 100th anniversary in 2020 of women gaining the right to vote;
- Drew up a legislative action plan and timeline, a proposed budget for the museum, and recommendations regarding its collections and governance — all based on a thorough investigation of the current fundraising and legislative climate;
- Identified best practices for engaging women in the development and design of the museum; the cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining the museum; and
- Developed a fundraising feasibility study to support the building of the museum through contributions from the private sector.

“The American Museum of Women’s History will tell the stories, celebrate the accomplishments, and illuminate American women’s history in ways that will inspire and inform people of all ages and all walks of life. Our history is not a piece of American history. It is American history,” added Abraham.

For more information, visit [www.amwh.us](http://www.amwh.us).