

Columbus, Ohio, May 16, 1916.

To the Franklin County

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

ASSOCIATION:

WE, the undersigned women of the Columbus Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have been requested to co-operate with you in the effort to obtain the adoption of a Woman's Suffrage Amendment to Ohio Constitution.

WE are of the opinion that in a general sense there is no good reason why all women should not have suffrage. If by assisting in the procurement of this great Constitutional right we do not injure ourselves, and on the contrary, can add anything to our means of defense and betterment as a race, we are willing to do it. It is certain that the granting of the suffrage would be of no practical advantage to Colored women, if by the enfranchisement of white women we help to increase the number of our civil and political oppressors. We have opposition enough in our struggle as a race for our civil rights and cannot consent to increase the forces against us.

WE have the impression that at some of the members of your Organization favor race discrimination and segregation as against colored people with reference to their political and civil rights. In fact it has been stated that much of the race discrimination against colored people in public entertainment, amusement, hotels, soda fountains, (even in our Department Stores), and discrimination against colored employees has its origin among the prominent white women of this city, including some of your Association.

WE believe in the homely maxim, "One good turn deserves another." We are willing to co-operate with you in the effort to obtain the adoption of a Suffrage Amendment to the Constitution on certain considerations and conditions; we are willing to assist you if you are willing to assist us. If your Association will actively and earnestly aid us in our movement to prevent race discrimination in this city against colored people, and will co-operate with us at all times and ways to prevent the abuses to which we are constantly subjected in public places of accommodation and enjoyment, in residence localities, office buildings, employment, &c., we will use our influence energetically among the men of our race to further the adoption of the

Suffrage Amendment will co-operate with you fully and sincerely in the promotion of your cause at all times and places where it is wise and profitable that we should do so.

It is generally known fact that the men of our race have been so deceived and mistreated in their efforts to secure justice and their civil and political rights that they do not generally favor woman's suffrage because to them the ballot in the hands of white women appears only in the light of an increased number of civil and political oppressors. Therefor, we will have a task of some magnitude and difficulty to prevent them from voting aganst it. But we think if the white women prove their fairness by assisting us as herein mentioned we can weild a great influence with the men of our race if we undertage to do so.

WE present these facts and conditions to you for your candid consideration and action as a body.

Very respectfully,

(Copy)

June 23rd, 1916.

To the Ladies of the Columbus Branch of the
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People:

We have duly considered your communication of May 16th and appreciate the questions which you raise.

Our organization is organized for the express purpose of securing the right ou equal suffrage for women and we have steadfastly refused to ally ourselves with any organization, no matter how much in sympathy with its purpose we may be.

You are organized for the express purpose of prevention of race disorimination. Many of our members, as individuals, appreciate the justice of your cause, and are willing to lend you their co-operation and support to your efforts, but it would be impossible for us to bind all of our members or to make an exception to the general which we have followed with other organizations, likewise your organization would probably find it was a matter beyond their control to secure co-operation of all members for our work. To those of your race who recognize that each injustice of government which may be righted is a step toward the righting of other wrongs, and those who recognize equal suffrage as a fundamental principle of democracy, we must look for assistance and co-operation as individuals, and we will welcome all such support which may come to us, and we believe that the common meetings necessary for the work in this cause will bring us to a better understanding of the other questions and develop interest in such a way as to be of mutual benefit.

We therefore extend to you our best wishes for the right solution of your problems and again invite your assistance in the purposes of this organization.

Signed Agnes V. Sawyer, (Chairman)