



**FAITH GAINEY**  
Communication

## WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL DISCOURSE AND FREE SPEECH?

Susan B. Anthony fought for the abolition of slavery and spoke at conventions, but when she was removed from speaking at a convention because she was a woman, she decided to use her freedom of speech to fight for women's rights. Civil discourse and free speech are important because people can use them to shed light on the underrepresentation and inequalities that pervade our society. As a woman passionate about the empowerment of women, I would like to share how important freedom of speech is. I will walk you through how freedom of speech was used to obtain women's right to vote and why it still matters today.

On August 18th, 1920 women gained the right to vote with the 19th Amendment. It was a century-long fight for this right. Women and men came alongside each other to fight for women's right to vote. People like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Grimke sisters, and Frederick Douglass all used their freedom of speech to fight for women's right to vote. They spoke at conventions, started organizations like the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and campaigned for universal suffrage. The suffragists gave speeches articulating the importance of voting and why it is so critical that all people be represented. In 1906, Susan B. Anthony died without getting to see the fruition of her

hard work, but the Amendment is nicknamed after her to honor her legacy. Using civil discourse and free speech women won the right to vote in America.

Freedom of speech is as vital today as it was in the women's suffrage movement because there are many areas in our society today where inequality still persists. For example, in the film industry and collegiate and professional sports women are not given the same opportunities as men. Women in these industries are paid less than men and not given as many job opportunities. But many people are speaking up against this disparity. Geena Davis, who started an institute dedicated to shedding light on the gender disparity in Hollywood and giving women a platform to speak, is using her voice to fight for women's equality. Speaking up against the injustice that exists is why free speech is so vital.

Women like Susan B. Anthony and Geena Davis represent the importance of freedom of speech. Free speech is important because it is used to fight against injustice and inequality. When people use their freedom of speech to fight against injustice and inequality, everyone's lives get better.