



April 12, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As strong women leaders from New Mexico, we are writing you to express our sincere thanks for your designation of the Sewall-Belmont House in Washington, D.C., as the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. Though, as New Mexicans, we live nearly 2,000 miles from the monument, we are living proof of the lasting cultural, societal and political impact of the movement that was nurtured there.

It was from the Sewall-Belmont House where the U.S. movement for women's suffrage gained a foothold in the nation's capital. As the home of suffragist leader Alice Paul in the early 20th Century, Sewall-Belmont House was headquarters for the National Woman's Party. This party would go on to become the blueprint for many of the civil rights movements that grew during the 20th Century.

We can think of no more appropriate place to celebrate the recognition and rise of women's power in politics and public life than the Sewall-Belmont House which is located at the center of American power. Because of your action to preserve and protect this home, future generations of girls, women and all Americans will never forget the decades of struggle it took for women to finally win the right to vote.

But as women from New Mexico, we understand the work that occurred at the Sewall-Belmont House does not represent the end of a movement, it represents the beginning of a much larger fight for equality. It would be decades more for many Hispanic, Black and Native American citizens to win that most basic and fundamental of American rights – the right to vote. In fact, Native Americans couldn't vote in New Mexico elections until 1948.

That struggle still continues to this day as political opportunists work tirelessly to silence the voices of many Americans by rolling back basic voter protections. Thankfully, we now have the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument to stand tall and remind us all to never stop in the fight for equality at the ballot box. Contact Alexandra Merlino regarding this letter: 917-721-3127 PRBnewmexico@gmail.com.

Regards,

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