

Thanks to My Great Aunt

She Fought for Women's Suffrage

Anne-Laure Perrot

BEFORE YOU READ: What is suffrage? Do you know anyone who has fought for it?

The first time I voted was very memorable, because my great aunt Marie-Claudia enthusiastically came with me. It was special to have her with me because when she was much younger, after World War I, she advocated for women's right to vote. With other women, she went door-to-door, explaining again and again how important it is for all people to have suffrage.

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Finally, in 1944, women gained suffrage in France.

Thanks to them, I too can add my voice to decide what's the best for the future of France and my community. I can choose my presi-

dent, my senators, and my representatives, and I can give my opinion on Constitutional amendments. I grew up knowing that I had both the power and duty as a citizen to make decisions at the voting booth. My voice matters and is sure to be counted.

Today, I live in the United States, where I have neither citizenship nor the right to vote. It's a weird situation: I respect the laws and pay taxes, but I cannot express my opinion at the ballot box! Isn't this what people fought against during the American Revolution? Didn't the colonists think that, if they were being taxed by the British, they should have a say in how they were governed?

Fortunately, the U.S. democratic system still gives me the chance to be counted: the census. In



2020, I can and must make my voice heard by respecting the Constitution of the United States and filling out the census form. This will ensure that my community has its fair share of resources from the federal government and the right number of representatives in congress.

Marie-Claudia was almost 50 when she voted for the very first time. Until she passed away, at the age of 102, she listened twice a week to the French ministers answering questions from the French House of Representatives. She carefully tracked the work of both the executive and the legislative branches. She listened to all their points, and that is how she made up her mind about how to vote. She truly believed in democracy and that voting is one of the most important civic rights we have.

When we left the ballot box that day, she told me how she was happy to have played a role in winning the right to vote for women!

AFTER YOU READ: According to the author, what was memorable about her first time going to vote? What is "weird" about her current situation in the United States? And how does she still plan to be "counted" (even though she can't vote)?

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