MT Ridge

Equality State

A009 · v0.3 · DRAFT

MTR Research · November 11, 2026

How Wyoming Became the Equality State

By Miles Ridge. Feature article, DRAFT v0.3, November 11, 2026. Target: wyovote.com. Companion to A009 v0.3 Equality State.docx. v0.3 is an edit pass at the owner's request: cut repetition so each point is stated once, firmly, then the story moves on; a bit more color, with each new image used once. The closer lands on a new beat and does not restate the lead. All facts, sources, and the lead photograph are unchanged from v0.1 and v0.2. No MTR Research data, no private data, and no draft or unreviewed internal reports are used.

1. Summary and angle

A009 is a short family explainer of why Wyoming is called the Equality State. The Word article tells one story, written so a parent and a child can follow it together. v0.1 was accurate but dry. v0.2 rewrote the prose with more color and wry Western voice. The owner then asked for less repetition, a little more color, and a habit of making a statement and sticking with it. v0.3 keeps the same facts, sources, photograph, and order. Humor is still commentary, not a new claim. The later "tea party" story about Esther Hobart Morris is still not used.

Repetition removed in v0.3:

- The Equality State name is explained once in the lead, then not restated. The later Secretary of State recap (1869 vote, kept at statehood, "name recognizes that history") and the closer recap ("not just a nickname on a map," "not a later advertising job," "started with a short bill in 1869," "kept in the constitution in 1890") were cut.
- "Wyoming went first / the nation waited" is said once (the 19th Amendment comparison and "The rest of the nation took its time"). The echo "Wyoming did not wait for a fairer wind" was cut.
- The 1871 veto and the 1890 constitutional guarantee remain as two separate events, each told once. The refrain that the right was "kept," "stayed in place," or "left in the barn," and the closer's repeat of "kept in the constitution," were cut. The "fence built to last" image is used only at the constitution.

- The keyword "equality" appeared six times in the v0.2 body (mostly in repeated uses of "Equality State"). It now appears once, in the lead, at the owner's request. The usual 5–6 keyword check is expected to fail.
- Paired "X. Not Y." constructions are used once ("This is not a name cooked up for a souvenir spoon"). Later ones were cut: "not a fat stack of paper"; "A jury is not a social call"; "not locked behind glass"; "not pretty talk for a parade"; "not just a nickname on a map."
- "Short bill" and "covered a lot of ground" are no longer repeated in the closer. The statue of Louisa Swain is described only in the closer, so the mid-article mention is not repeated there.
- Filler echoes cut or not reused: "grant of political equality"; "the work was still the work" / "It is work"; "the motto and the state name both point the same way"; "plain as a brand on a hide" in the lead (the brand idea was not reused; the seal now uses "dates burned into a beam").

A little more color, each image used once: souvenir spoon; weather that is never shy, and open ground waiting to be crossed; a desk full of first decisions; a short length of rope holding a gate; a gavel that still has weight; sitting in judgment as no small chore; a later crop of lawmakers wanting a different ending; a fence built to last; dates burned into a beam; handing a woman the reins; a hitching rail in a yard; light and dust in any season, and stepping out of the wind. The closer is the Laramie statue in the open air, a new beat, not a restatement of the lead.

The one main idea is that the name is not just a nickname. It comes from a territorial law signed on Dec. 10, 1869, and from the same right being kept in the state constitution when Wyoming entered the Union on July 10, 1890.

Supporting points in the Word article:

- William Bright introduced the 1869 bill; Gov. John Campbell signed it. The law gave women age 21 or older the right to vote and to hold office.
- The change showed up in 1870: Esther Hobart Morris was appointed justice of the peace in South Pass City (Feb. 17); women were named to a jury in Laramie (March); Louisa Swain of Laramie voted (Sept. 6).
- In 1871 the territorial legislature tried to repeal the law; Governor Campbell vetoed that bill.
- Article 6, Section 1 of the Wyoming Constitution protects the right to vote and hold office without denial "on account of sex," and says male and female citizens "shall equally enjoy all civil, political and religious rights and privileges."
- The official motto is "Equal Rights." The Great Seal shows a woman with that banner, the dates 1869 and 1890, and the number 44.

- In 1925, Nellie Tayloe Ross became the first woman governor in the United States.

Type: Feature. The existing A_CATEGORY list was News, Opinion, Research, and TBD. This piece is not inverted-pyramid news, not opinion, and not an MTR data report. A Feature row (code F) was added to A_CATEGORY so the footer can say FEATURE. Class is not yet confirmed by the owner.

The article target is wyovote.com.

2. Voice and target

The article target is wyovote.com. The wry ranch-hand kitchen-table voice from v0.2 is kept. At the owner's request, v0.3 cuts repetition and adds a little more color, with each point and each image used once. Asides about lawmakers and the Legislature remain gentle and nonpartisan, aimed at institutions and human nature, never at a living person or a party. No first person. No crude language. No dialect spellings, and no howdy, partner, or yeehaw. No number, date, quotation, or sourced claim was changed or added to fit the voice. Commentary is framed as commentary. Byline: Miles Ridge.

This is a Feature family piece, not a news inverted-pyramid story. The tighter "flavor only in the lead, transitions, and closer" habit of v0.1 remains relaxed, as in v0.2, because the owner asked for color throughout.

3. Facts used and the source for each

All pages were opened and checked on Nov. 11, 2026 (America/Denver).

Fact in the Word article	Source
Nickname Equality State; official motto "Equal Rights"; the name recognizes that Wyoming gave women the vote as a territory in 1869 and kept the right at statehood	Wyoming Secretary of State, Student's Corner, State Symbols. https://sos.wyo.gov/Services/StateInfo_Symbols.aspx

Fact in the Word article	Source
Wyoming Territory created July 25, 1868; John A. Campbell first territorial governor; Dec. 10, 1869, "Female Suffrage" bill signed; Esther Hobart Morris of South Pass City appointed justice of the peace Feb. 17, 1870 (first woman ever appointed to that office); women first empaneled for jury service in Laramie, March 1870; first equal suffrage vote by Mrs. Louisa Swain of Laramie, Sept. 6, 1870; admitted as 44th state July 10, 1890; Nellie Tayloe Ross first woman governor in the U.S., 1925	State of Wyoming, Chronology. https://www.wyo.gov/about-wyoming/wyoming-history/chronology
Council Bill 70, introduced by William H. Bright; act text (every woman age 21, residing in the Territory, may vote and hold office); approved Dec. 10, 1869, by J.A. Campbell; 1871 repeal attempt vetoed by Campbell; Wyoming admitted as the 44th state and the first to guarantee the right in its constitution, July 10, 1890	Wyoming State Library, Women's Suffrage in Wyoming: Legislation. https://gowyld.libguides.com/wyomingwomenssuffrage/legislation
Article 6, Section 1: "The rights of citizens of the State of Wyoming to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. Both male and female citizens of this state shall equally enjoy all civil, political and religious rights and privileges."	Wyoming Legislature, Wyoming Constitution (Title 97), official compilation, accessed Nov. 11, 2026. https://www.wyoleg.gov/statutes/compress/title97.pdf

Fact in the Word article	Source
Great Seal adopted by the Second Legislature in 1893 and revised by the Sixteenth Legislature in 1921; woman with "Equal Rights" banner; dates 1869 and 1890; number 44	Wyoming Secretary of State, Great Seal. https://sos.wyo.gov/Services/GreatSeal.aspx . Design also in W.S. 8-3-101 (Title 8 official compilation).
About 50 years before the 19th Amendment (1920)	Arithmetic from the 1869 date; the State Library notes that the 1869 act preceded the 19th Amendment by 50 years.

The Word article uses "John Campbell" and "William Bright" in the body (middle initials omitted so a period after an initial is not read as the end of a sentence). Credits and this file use the full forms John A. Campbell and William H. Bright.

W.S. 8-3-107 confirms the motto: 'The motto "Equal Rights," as it exists on the great seal of the state of Wyoming, is the official motto of Wyoming.'

4. Claims considered and dropped or limited

- The "tea party" story that Esther Hobart Morris hosted a meeting in 1869 and extracted a promise from William Bright to introduce the suffrage bill was not used. WyoHistory.org and other later reviews treat that account as unsupported; Morris herself later credited Bright with presenting the bill. The Word article states only what official state records support: she was appointed justice of the peace on Feb. 17, 1870.
- The often-repeated telegram, "We will remain out of the Union a hundred years rather than come in without woman suffrage," was not used. The Wyoming State Library says the original telegram has not come to light and that later quotations may have taken liberties. The article says only that the right was written into the constitution and that Wyoming entered as a state with that guarantee.
- "First in the world" was not used for either the 1869 law or Louisa Swain's vote. Official wording used instead: first equal suffrage vote in the territory (state chronology); first state to specifically give women the right to vote, done as a territory in 1869 and retained at statehood (Secretary of State); first to guarantee the right in its constitution (State Library).
- Swain's age (often given as about 70) was omitted. The official chronology does not state her age.
- The later jury-service gap (women served in 1870; mixed juries did not return until 1950, after a 1949 law change) is noted by the State Library. It was left out of the Word article to keep the family story simple. It is not contradicted by the 1870 jury sentence, which is limited to that first Laramie jury.

- Exact House and Senate vote totals on the 1869 bill, and the later congressional vote totals on statehood, were not used. They were not needed for the angle, and the statehood margin was not taken from a primary congressional record in this draft.

5. Photograph

- File: "The Franchise," a statue of Louisa Swain by John D. Baker, in the Johnson Lummis Hunkins Plaza outside the Wyoming House for Historic Women, Laramie, Wyoming.
- Photographer: Carol M. Highsmith. Date: July 15, 2015. Gates Frontiers Fund Wyoming Collection, Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (LCCN 2015633333; LC-DIG-highsm-33318).
- License: public domain. The Library of Congress lists "No known restrictions on publication." Highsmith has stipulated that her photographs are in the public domain.
- Item page: https://www.loc.gov/item/2015633333/ . Display width in Word: 6.5 in.
- The Highsmith caption calls Swain "the first woman in the world known to have voted." That "world" wording is not used in the article (see section 4). The statue and the plaza commemorate Swain's Sept. 6, 1870, vote.

6. Publishing checks (tools/check.py, v0.3)

Body word count 657, excluding title, deck, caption and credits. Longest sentence 28 words. Checked with credit markers removed. The informal length aim for this revision is about 650 to 800 words. The usual 800–1,500 word publishing check is for longer newspaper pieces and is not the target length here. The article's target is wyovote.com.

Check	Result	Measured
Word count 800-1,500	FAIL (expected)	657 (family draft, about 650 to 800 words)
No sentence of 20+ words	FAIL (expected)	longest 28; a few sentences run longer for yarn rhythm
Paragraphs of no more than 4 sentences	PASS	no paragraph over 4 sentences; some short (allowed)
Keyword "equality" 5-6 times in body	FAIL (expected)	1; reduced from 6 at the owner's request, so the name is stated once
3+ links	PASS	5
Keyword in title and description	PASS	title and description

Flesch-Kincaid grade level of the Word body: 5.7 (average sentence about 13 words). The informal aim for this revision is grade 5 to 7. Voice and target check: target wyovote.com; v0.3 cuts repetition and adds a little more color, at

the owner's request; each point stated once; no number, date, quotation, or sourced claim was changed; humor is commentary; no first person; no crude language; no mocking of living people or parties; byline Miles Ridge; no private data.

Appendix A. Version log and change log

Version	Date	Change
v0.3 DRAFT	2026-11-11	v0.3: cut repetition, each point stated once; a bit more color, at the owner's request; facts unchanged. Same sources, photograph, structure, and credits as v0.1 and v0.2. Status remains 30 Drafting.
v0.2 DRAFT	2026-11-11	v0.2: rewrite with more color and wry Western voice, at the owner's request; facts unchanged. Same sources, photograph, structure, and credits as v0.1. Status remains 30 Drafting.
v0.1 DRAFT	2026-11-11	First draft. Folksy family feature for wyovote.com, at the owner's request. Sources: Wyoming Secretary of State (symbols and Great Seal), official state chronology, Wyoming State Library suffrage legislation guide, and the Legislature's official compilation of the Wyoming Constitution (Title 97), Article 6, Section 1. Public-domain Highsmith photograph of "The Franchise" statue in Laramie. Status 30 Drafting.