

Christian Community Leaders Celebrate the Designation of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

Creation Justice Ministries, our members, and our partners celebrate today over President Obama's designation of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. The new monument formerly known as the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum is in Washington, DC on Capitol Hill, and it holds the only fully in-tact collection of artifacts and materials from the women's suffrage movement. These pieces of history are precious to our communities, and we are grateful President Obama's action to make the house a unit of the National Park system has ensured the public will have access to tour the facility, view the artifacts from that era, and use its library in perpetuity.



Shantha Ready Alonso, Executive Director of Creation Justice Ministries, said of the monument: "Our Christian faith teaches that men and women are created in the image of God, and every human being has dignity. We are compelled by our faith to continue the struggle to secure full social, economic, and legal integration of women into society. The Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument will give men and women a sacred place to reflect. May we treasure this place for generations to come, and be inspired by the witness of our sister in Christ Alice Paul, along with her fellow leaders in the National Woman's Party."

Sera Chung, Associate for Gender and Racial Justice for the Presbyterian Church (USA), said "One of the greatest injustices of our time is gender inequality. It is timely that we celebrate and remember the passion and struggles of Alice Paul, a key leader for women's rights in the 20th century. Alice Paul knew that women's right to vote was worth fighting for. It is our responsibility to recognize that the Sewall-Belmont House, a rich heritage of justice, is worth fighting to keep."

The monument designation is especially meaningful to Quakers, who share a faith tradition with Alice Paul, the leader of the National Woman's Party, whose story is told within the house's walls.

General Secretary of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Christie Tessmer highlighted the spiritual significance of the new monument: "The Quaker tradition nurtures active, inquiring minds, and calls us to listen to the still small voice of the Divine within us. We can do this spiritual work of listening at our meeting houses, in the natural world, and through special places that hold our collective memory."

Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation, said of the designation: "the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is pleased to support the designation of the Sewall-Belmont House as a national monument. From the earliest days of our founding as the Religious Society of Friends, Quakers have often been among those who have helped drive political and social change in our country. That work continues today from the FCNL office, neighboring the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum. The prophetic, persistent, and powerful voices of such Quaker women as Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul, who led women's suffrage and equal rights movements, continue to inform FCNL's work for equality and justice today. They serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of voting and engaging in the democratic process to create the world we seek."

In this election year, Creation Justice Ministries encourages all people to reflect on the hard-won right to vote, and the implications our votes will have for our ability to do justice for God's planet and God's people.

Creation Justice Ministries represents the creation care policies of 38 Christian communions, including Baptists, mainline Protestants, Historically Black Churches, Peace Churches, and Orthodox communions. Learn more at www.creationjustice.org

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