

Synopsis

Katja von Garnier's "Iron Jawed Angels" movie tells the remarkable and little-known story of a group of young women, led by Alice Paul and her friend Lucy Burns, who put their lives on the line to fight for American women's right to vote. They head an outstanding female ensemble, with Inez Milholland, Ruza Wenclawska, Doris Steven, Emily Leighton, and Mabel Vernon.

The movie started in Philadelphia at 1912; young suffragist activists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns have a meeting with Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw of NAWSA (National American Woman Suffrage Association, formed in 1890 by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton). Paul and Burns want to press for a constitutional amendment for women to have the right to vote, but the older women prefer a state-by-state approach. Paul is permitted to take over NAWSA's Washington, D.C. committee, provided she and Burns raise their own funds. They begin planning their first big event, a parade to promote women's suffrage, and recruit a team of volunteers.

When Catt calls for an NAWSA board investigation into the expenditures of Paul and Burns, they leave the organization to form the National Woman's Party (NWP), which opposes any candidate against the proposed constitutional amendment. Burn and friends held the direct protesting in front of White House, the public against the suffragettes with arrested on the trumped-up charge of "obstructing traffic," even though their picket line is on the sidewalk. Refusing to pay a fine for a crime they

don't commit, the women are sentenced to sixty days in an Occoquan, Virginia women's prison. When Paul and Mrs. Leighton join the picket line, they are attacked by a mob, and subsequently imprisoned themselves. Paul goes on a hunger strike. She is then denied counsel, placed in a straitjacket, and subjected to examination in the psychiatric ward.

Catt tries to get President Wilson to repay her years of loyalty by finally supporting the suffrage amendment, but he refuses. Catt seizes the moment to press President Wilson into supporting the suffrage amendment, and the women are released from prison as he comes out in its favour in a Congressional speech.

By 1920, 35 states have ratified the amendment, but one more state is needed. Tennessee becomes that state when a recalcitrant legislator casts the deciding vote after receiving a telegram from his mother (a real life event). On Aug. 26, 1920, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment becomes law, and 20 million American women win the right to vote.