The Home Protection Ballot and the Hinds Bill of 1879

Brought before the Illinois state legislature in 1879, the Hinds Bill represented years of tireless effort on the part of Frances Willard and the WCTU in pushing for temperance reform. Willard’s ideas regarding the merging of temperance with women’s suffrage had resulted in a disagreement with the organization’s national leadership. In 1877 Willard shifted her focus to the state of Illinois, working to organize a statewide petition campaign in support of the “Home Protection Ballot”, which would grant women the right to vote alongside men on the question of granting local liquor licenses. Across the state, the women of the WCTU worked to build support for the “Home Protection Ballot”, including an intensive lobbying effort in Springfield which was led by Willard herself.

In the spring of 1879 the Illinois WCTU presented a petition containing over 170,000 names before the state legislature. With the giant petition roll prominently displayed in the legislative chamber, and with many state WCTU members present, Willard was reluctantly allowed to address the Illinois Senate. In her eloquent style, she spoke regarding the importance of granting both men and women the right to vote on the question of local liquor sales. The subsequent Hinds Bill was named for state representative Andrew Hinds, a Willard ally and backer of the proposed legislation. Unfortunately, the bill was defeated when it came up for vote in the summer of 1879. Nevertheless, the extensive public relations and lobbying effort which resulted in the Hinds Bill, including an unprecedented petition drive, demonstrated the WCTU’s resourcefulness and effectiveness in pushing for reform.
Here is an excerpt from Willard’s “Address Before the Illinois Senate”, which she delivered on April 10, 1879:

We have come before you with a petition numbering over 175,000 names; 75,000 to 80,000 voters of Illinois have said to us women, “We believe that good will come out of your movement and we will stand by you.” Just as you honorable gentlemen who granted us this “hearing” have stood by us this morning. I wish to speak of some of the reasons why we believe that our movement will not prove futile. I had thought that I would like, if we might so long trespass upon valuable time of senators, to speak concerning prohibition or “local option,” which is the phase of prohibition we have adopted in our work – not saying “You shall, whether you will or not,” to a locality, but saying “you may, if you will, have the saloon as one of the institutions of your town, or you may not.” That is what we would like have become the law of this our land, and we would like all who are to be affected in their homes and in their happiness and in their personal property by these saloons, to have a voice in saying whether they shall be among the institutions of the town in which they live. We have believed that if this could be achieved, it would have effect to banish saloons from our fair state. Not in a year, gentlemen.

…There is another question that has been often brought forward in the days I have spent at the capital. Gentlemen who are very friendly to the efforts we are making, say, “We believe in Home Protection measure, and we wish there were not saloons. We know they ought not to be. Some day they will not be, but women are so given up to any one subject they fix their gaze upon that, and they forget how varied are the subjects that we must discuss, how manifold the interests entrusted to our hands. They forget that there is no party which wishes to give its alliance to this new subject of woman’s temperance on the ballot, and thus to enlist against itself the strength of that vote and constituency which always votes solid, the strength of those who, whether we are vigilant or not, are always on hand, and will make themselves felt in political Caucus and in all branches of political manipulation.” In reply to that objection may I say briefly this: Has anybody called the campaign which placed this petition around these walls a political campaign? Is it the nationalists who have stood at the front and have worked out this result which has cost so much time and labor? Is it socialists? What party is it that is responsible
for the 175,000 names gathered up in the last few weeks in Illinois? Let me the say to you brothers, that if this has not been a political campaign neither will any further effort of ours be political.

A prominent member of one of the house of the legislature said to me. “If you women – if you only could – I don’t see how you can if you only could lift up this subject out of the rut of party politics, if you only could enlist the men of all parties so it would in no way be party issue, your success is assured; until that is done it will never be assured.” Gentlemen, suppose you place this question so sad, so complicated - this question which has been the elephant in the hands of the parties always – placed in the hands of those who, while they have most at stake in its decision, yet belong to no party – then do you not lift it out this “rut” of which this party leader spoke? Is it not right that we should have placed in our hands by constitutional amendment? Will you not say, “It is fair, it is just, it is equitable; many of us are judges of the law, many of us are lawyers, and we feel it is not right utterly to ignore in the halls of legislation such a petition as this. We will transfer burden to the shoulders of the people. We will allow them to say what they will do.”

Suppose you should do that. Then may I frankly sketch for you what I believe our action would be. We have in Illinois today 200 woman’s temperance societies. We are organizing others constantly. If you gave us the long arm of the lever in that fashion we would organize them faster than ever. In each locality where the Woman’s Temperance Union had headquarters we would open books of record. We would ask our brothers frankly, straightforwardly, just as we have done here – and most of them have frankly and straightforwardly replied – “Are you for an amendment that will let us women have a voice in determining the legal status of the saloon, or are you against it? Will you let us put your name down in our book?”

That is what we should do in every town, in every hamlet, in every village, in every city. We should only know humanity striving by every means to lift itself up to the level of better life. Some of you say, “Oh well! They would promise you one way and go and vote another.” Would they, then? We don’t believe it. There was a Judas among the twelve, but there were eleven who stood firm and true, and I believe we should find more than that proportion. You may say it is a woman’s ignorant faith. It is honest faith, founded on evidence as all true faith must be, that we should find the same men standing by us who put their names on the petition, who two days ago by tens of thousands voted “no license” in scores of towns in Illinois.
This is a copy of the “Home Protection” petition which the Illinois WCTU drafted in support of their efforts to combine women’s suffrage with temperance reform at the local level.
This is a copy from the Illinois Senate Journal which demonstrates the challenges facing Frances Willard in presenting her case before the all male legislative body. The second document shows the narrow voting margin which allowed her the opportunity to speak.

Entry from Senate Journal (Scrapbook 32, April 10, 1879, Willard Archives)
At 10:20 o'clock, A.M., Mr. Ford moved that the Senate take a recess of thirty minutes for the purpose of allowing Miss Frances E. Hillard an opportunity to address the Senators in behalf of the object of the petition just presented, and the yeas and nays being demanded, it was decided in the affirmative by the following vote:

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Year: 24
Nays: 19
Statement published by Willard and the WCTU following the defeat of the Hinds Bill in 1879.

HEADQUARTERS W. C. T. U. OF ILLINOIS,

TO THE FRIENDS OF HOME PROTECTION:

Love's labor was not lost in 1879. We recruited a constituency of 175,000 of the best men and women in Illinois. Of 832 towns voting last spring upon the license question, 645 carried no license—largely as a result of the awakened public sentiment resulting from our work. Saloon keepers know this, and have admitted that the psalm-singers who went to Springfield last winter did more harm than any other effort made by temperance people in Illinois. The Legislature denied our prayer, on the third reading of the Hinds bill, though on second reading we had votes enough and one to spare. We look to you to remember those who voted for us, and to replace those who voted against us by better men in the autumn of 1880. This winter there is no Legislative session, but among the PEOPLE who will select our next law makers we must steadily urge the advantage we have gained. Therefore we send you Petition No. 2, addressed to those smaller Legislatures called "Municipal Councils" and "Town Boards." It is accompanied by an ordinance for the adoption of which the petition asks, and you will, we are confident, zealously labor. The local authorities, being free to grant licenses, are also free to condition such grant upon the expressed will of a majority of the entire adult population, and to employ such a method of ascertaining that will as they may choose. But there is no method which has as well sustained the true test of experience as the dropping of each one's printed opinion into a box, and for this our ordinance provides. It is applicable to either cities or villages, organized under the general laws of Illinois, and is pronounced by the highest legal authority in the State to be clearly constitutional and legal. If possible, this ordinance should be passed before the next municipal election, for all existing licenses expire at that time, and should the ordinance not be passed before then, the saloons may all be licensed for another year before it can take effect. If any towns that have voted no license are disposed to go back to license, by all means urge upon them the adoption of this ordinance before election, thus putting upon the liquor interest the burden of an effort to secure its repeal. In many places, the local elections can be made to turn upon this ordinance, thus giving the impetus of a living issue and raising a standard around which we can vigorously rally. Let the petition and the ordinance for which it provides be presented to the Council by a strong delegation of temperance men and women, and let the pulpit, press and platform be enlisted to the utmost possible degree in bringing the endeavor to the knowledge and judgment of the people. Finally, let the entire work be "begun, continued and ended" in prayer, an All-Day Prayer Meeting of the churches, W. C. T. U. and other temperance societies being the very first assembly convoked in the interest of this work.

"Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

On behalf of Illinois W. C. T. U.

FRANCES E. WILLARD, PRESIDENT,

ELIZABETH R. RITZENHOFER, CAIRO, COM. ON HOME
MRS. G. H. KIEDE, BLOOMINGTON, PROTECTION PETITION.

MARY A. WILLARD, SECRETARY
HELEN W. STOCKIN, AUDITOR.

January 1, 1880.

Statement published by Willard ("Home Protection" Folder, January 1, 1880, Willard Archives)
A similar legislative initiative in Massachusetts also failed to pass. Here is an 1879 telegram addressed to Frances Willard which delivers the bad news.

![Telegram to Frances Willard (Scrapbook 32, 1879, Willard Archive)](image)

- How did Willard try to portray the defeat of the Hinds Bill in a positive light? How could it be interpreted as a victory for the women’s rights movement and temperance reform?
- Why was it so important that Willard was allowed to speak before the Illinois Senate?
- In what ways did “Home Protection” potentially give women a voice in politics?
Frances Willard was keenly in tune to the popular sentiment and politics of her generation. The Civil War was the decisive political event of the second half of the nineteenth century, and the WCTU’s activities occurred against the backdrop of Reconstruction and the attempted reunification of a divided nation. On May 30, 1888, Decoration Day (modern day Memorial Day) Willard delivered an address entitled “The Greatest Party” at the national convention of the Prohibition Party in Indianapolis. The event was representative of the strong working relationship which had developed between the WCTU and the Prohibition Party in seeking the U S Presidency.

To the right is an article published in the Chicago Tribune on May 31, 1888 describing the events at the convention.

The Drinkers of Water Article (Scrapbook 32, Chicago Tribune, May 31, 1888, Willard Archives)
Here is a transcript of the article:

Delegates from All Sections Assemble at Indianapolis - Features of the Preliminary Work - all the Party's Candidates Are Present - St. John Tells How a Man Feels Who Has Been Hanged in Effigy - Woman Suffrage Finds Friends - Committees and Routine Work

Indianapolis, Ind, May 30 - [Special.] - The Prohibitionists are scheming to absorb the women suffrage people and the Women's Christian Temperance Union as well. Nothing less than a declaration in favor of woman suffrage will win one faction, with the other, year after year, gets nearer and nearer to prohibition. The officers of the Temperance Union are in attendance upon the convention. Miss Willard is receiving marked attentions from the Prohibitionists, and is a member of the Committee on Resolutions. With Miss Willard are Miss Ester Pugh of Chicago, the Treasurer; Miss Caroline Buell of Cincinnati, the Corresponding Secretary; Miss Anna Shaw of Massachusetts, Superintendent of the Franchise Department; Dr. K.A. Bushnell of Chicago, Superintendent of the Department of Social Purity; Miss Clara Hoffman, President of the Missouri W.C.T.U.; Miss Josephine R Nichols, President of the Indiana W.C.T.U.; and Miss Anna Gordon of Chicago. The Prohibitionists of the North are healthy in accord with woman suffrage, and will endorse the most radical plank that can be drawn in its favor. Those of the South, however, rebel at the suggestion of the theory. Bishop Turner sounded the keynote in his speech this afternoon when he warned his new-found friends not to place riders on their cause by lugging in the side issues. Miss Willard will fight for women suffrage on the floor of the convention if need be, and this question will be one of the distinctive features of the affair. The Committee on Resolutions will probably spend the night in formulating a platform. The task is indeed a difficult one. The Prohibitionists are easily satisfied, but not so with the suffragists and the union people. The committee has any number of propositions before it, and the Women's Union will insist upon the adoption of a plank as follows:

We favor as an important part of the movement of shortening the hours of labor the enactment of a National law exempting from Sunday work all Government employees and forbidding all Sunday work on the railroads so far as Congressional control of the inter-State commerce will permit, believing that the law of Sabbath rest is both a law of God and a law of nature, and so should be a law of nations, especially in Republics, whose liberty can be preserved only by such
culture of mind and heart and conscience as is afforded by the leisure hours of the American Sabbath protected against both toil and dissipation.

The South will furnish a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, and Green Clay Smith of Kentucky will probably be the man.

It is a queer convention. There are 1,000 delegates, nearly one-half of them are women. There are many grey heads in the lot, and extreme youthfulness is also well represented. Pink-faced college boys sit side by side with veterans. In a few cases whole families sit as delegates. It is the boast of the Colorado delegation that it consists of three generations, and they promise to have the fourth generation by the next convention. Though the women are numerous they do not have much to say. Many of them appear to be disgusted with the loquacity of their husbands and brothers. A delegate from New York was continually jumping to his feet. When he rose for his third speech on one question his wife had a frown on her face. When he rose for this forth effort she raised a laugh in her neighborhood by taking hold of his coat-tails and pulling him down into his seat.

Many well-known men and women are present. Miss Willard is one of the heroines of the hour. She is earnestly in favor of a women’s-suffrage plank and will doubtless carry her point. Ex-Gov. St. John, of course, in another lion. He, too, is in favor of women suffrage and wants the platform to declare in favor of a revision of the tariff in favor of the consumer. The Governor kindly volunteers the opinion that Mr. Cleveland will be reelected and the at the Prohibitionists will go into power in 1892. Mr. St. John denies that prohibition is a failure in Kansas and says there is more drinking in Indianapolis than the whole State of Kansas. Neal Dow attracts a good deal of attention. He estimates the total Prohibition vote this year at 500,000. Sam Small is one of the biggest fish in the puddle. He brings rosy reports of the rise of the third party in his State, as does J.B. Cranfil of Texas about the anti-saloon boom in that State. He says the party will pull 50,000 votes there and that the Democrats are badly scared. Dr. Godwin of California says the Republicans out of his way want Leland Stanford for President simply because he has more saloons than any other man in the State. The good doctor is also confident of Cleveland's election, as most of the Prohibitionists appear to be.
The third partyites may not be the best politicians in the world, but they are smart enough to want a man for Vice-President who has a bar'l. Oddly enough they are pressing for that honor another member of the English family of Indiana, a favorite with the Eastern delegates being Dr. J.B. English, President of the Baltimore Board of Trade. Mr. English is rich and a cousin of Bill English of Indianapolis. An exceedingly noisy memorial service was held tonight, and the Committee on Resolutions is struggling with the platform. Tomorrow the multitudinous managers of the convention hope to nominate their ticket, adopt a platform, make some arrangements for raising campaign fund, sing the Doxology, and get away to their homes.
"The Greatest Party Speech" (Timely Talks No. 33, 1888, Willard Archives)
Part that banner, roll it, slowly;  
Trust it gently, it is holy;  
Let no tears above the dead.  
Truth it cut, until it never,  
Let us decay, feared forever,  
For its people’s hopes are dead.

Not that I loved that flag. Nay, verily. I loved the star too well not to destroy its shining; but then, as many brave hearts bled for it, so many gentle women, long and solemn, with lying, with tears, with soldier’s woe, with our own heart’s woe. That I never loved the flag before, and yet, as I love all the brave and the beautiful, I love the flag. For it is a symbol of our land, of our people, of our inheritance.

In the sequel of that mighty movement, God’s Patent East of power upon the nation, behold this woman, who, only a year ago, went to the polls to persuade men to cast their ballots for prohibition in Oregon and Texas, in Michigan and Tennessee. If the reform of the greatest party be true to us as we have been and will be to all, then, ten years hence we will help those who were helped in our time to stand for the conviction that prohibition in 1865, with our guns that are hallowed, as we are now helping with our bullets that are hallowed. We never expected to speak with pride about the “South” so much, but surely it was this now that it is becoming “white” for the “grey” ticket, and you were right, there may be said that the Northern men to be more, this time, and with the same war-try as at which one—

The great Lincoln’s body of memory, stretching from sea to sea, the sacred hour and the patriotic grave, all over this broad land, shall more and more swell the chorus of the world when again he sings, we tenderly will lay, in the noblest words of our nation. That angel is the living, the dying, and the dead, and the fulfillment of that prophecy we have lived to see.

There is a race for nationalism as against sectionalism, it stands at the most of arms and aspirations of the country, in agitation, in monopolies that dare to demand that holy war, “trust it” stands for the future, that we must be upon the path, the home vote with an educational test at the national vote with a local test as at its culmination, and, most of all, it stands for the reconciling and absolute prohibition of the bill as against every other movement of the nation and the government. For while the greatest party will never hesitate to be the champion of the people’s good and great, or closely linked with its own great purposes, neither must it fail to put prohibition by politcs as far as is the lead that soon beyond for a moment the question the support of these overwhelming issues for we are firmly persuaded that the separation of the people into two distinct classes, one voting for men who will make the public cause, and the other for men who will make the public war, and that such separation cannot come too soon. We are not here to speak words of war but rather other energies, but simply to declare that in this great emergency we cannot depend upon our machinery and the ambition of party leaders to-day stand between the people and their opportunity. We can write the track for prohibition. We are bound to be. For this war we were, and for this cause we be the world.

When I think of Lexington and Paul Rever, when I think of Lobster red on the face, and Dog, when I think of Washington, that greatest of the politicians, I open my eyes in prayer at Valley Forge, and I think of Stonewall Jackson praying before I fought of Robert Lee and Sidney Johnston's

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Here is a transcript of several key passages from the speech:

Here side by side sit the Blue and the Gray. No other than the Prohibition Party ever dared to be so great as to ordain a scene like this. I speak the words of truth - and soberness.

What a circle we have here! Sweep the compasses of thought through its circumference. Prohibition, first of all, the fixed point whence we calculate all others. The Blue and the Gray, the workingmen, the women. Enclosed and shielded by the circle is the home – that goes without saying; and beyond its shining curve is the saloon, out-matched, out-witted, and out-voted, which, in a republic, is best of all. For the fiat of the greatest party has gone forth, and we are here simply to set our seals to it; no saloon in politics or law, no sectionalism in law or politics, no sex in citizenship, but liberty, equality, fraternity in politics and law, now and forevermore.

This is our platform in a nutshell, and it is a platform of four ideas at least.

When, in all history, were such matchless issues espoused by such magnanimous men? There are two other parties; big but not great; multitudinous, not masterful. Their tissue is adipose, not muscular. The issues of the one are made literally out of whole cloth, of all-wool tariff, warranted to wash in yet one more campaign, and the ensanguined shirt warranted never to be washed at all. Those of the other are spoils and Bourbonism. They will soon rally their respective clans to their stereotyped, old-fashioned conventions in Chicago and St. Louis, prepared to fight, bleed, and die for their country and its offices once more. Not a woman will be in their delegations. A woman might displace some man. Not a word about the home. No decisive utterance as to the greatest of our national perils.

Probably women would not attend these conventions, even were their presence sought. They certainly could not hold their own at the bar of the saloon, while in the greatest party they are only required to hold their own at the bar of public opinion.

Meanwhile, as if to set before these brethren a loftier example, the greatest party welcomes here the home folks to equal opportunities and honors, and rallies here a remnant of the noble veterans who have learned that it is good to forgive, best to forget, attesting by this splendid and fraternal object lesson, that one party spells “nation” with the tallest kind of capital “N” – one that indeed includes “the people of these United States” – and that the Blue and the Gray are to us nothing less than the blue sky that bends its tender arch above us all, and the gray ocean that enfolds one country and one flag.
…The greatest party stands for nationalism as against sectionalism; it stands for the noblest aims and aspirations of the wageworker as against monopolies that dare to profane that holy word, “trust”; it stands for the future in politics as against the past, the home vote with an educational test as against the saloon vote with a beer-breath as its credentials; and best of all, it stands for the everlasting and absolute prohibition of sin as against any alliance between sin and the government. For while the greatest party will never hesitate to be the champion of these causes good and great, so closely linked with its own central purposes, neither must it fail to put prohibition by law and prohibition by politics so far in the lead that no candid man can for a moment question the august supremacy of these overmastering issues. We are firmly persuaded that the separation of the people into two separate armies, one voting for men who will outlaw the poison curse, and the other for men who will legalize it, must come, and that such separation cannot come too soon. We are not here to speak harsh words of armies rallied under other ensigns, but simply to declare that in this great emergency we cannot depend on them. Party machinery and the ambition of party leaders today stand between the people and their opportunity. We would clear the track for prohibition. We are bound to do it. For that were we born and for that we came into this world.

- In regards to women, what made the Prohibition Party unique from either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

- Between the newspaper article and Miss Willard's speech, why do you think she considered the Prohibition Party, the greatest party?

- What were the Prohibition Party's greatest obstacles? How did Willard attempt to rectify the obstacles in her speech?

- Why did Willard feel unification between all the different groups was an important aspect of the Prohibition Party and its goals?