*U.S. History (11th Gr.) New West Charter Instructor: Ms Hynes*

**Semester 1 Final: Part 1**

**Simulation: The 1869 Meeting of the American Equal Rights Association (AERA)**

**Background:** The American Equal Rights Association was formed in 1866 *“to secure equal rights to all American citizens, especially the right of suffrage, irrespective of race, color, or sex.”* The membership of this organization featured some very prominent reformers and activists of the day including former abolitionists (now civil rights leaders in a post-Civil War America), and women’s rights activists, both black and white, male and female. Many of these individuals had known one another for years and worked closely together across organizational lines for women’s rights, the abolitionist cause, and the temperance movement.

In 1867, the U.S. Congress passed the 15th Amendment, legislation that proposed to remove barriers to suffrage for African American males. In the two years since then, relations between the members of the AERA became strained as they tried to decide as an organization whether or not to support the 15th Amendment as it stood, and campaign for full ratification by the states, or, to work against it and fight instead for a Constitutional amendment which would enfranchise all Americans together – an idea consistent with the founding values of the organization itself. The recent Kansas and New York campaigns that the AERA organized during the prior two-year period ended in greater divisions between abolitionists and women’s suffrage advocates.

**As an organization:**

* Will you decide to support the 15th Amendment as it was written and passed by Congress, and campaign for its ratification by the states?
* Will you demand an additional amendment that guarantees women’s suffrage, or call for the 15th Amendment to be defeated by the states and revised to include women?
* Will you work to ensure the survival of the AERA which seems to be weakening under disagreements?
* Will you choose to leave the AERA and pursue the formation of your own organization?

**Instructions:** Study your role carefully and prepare to make your arguments to the other members regarding what direction you think the AERA should take.

**Roles:**

* Lucretia Mott
* Elizabeth Cady Stanton
* Lucy Stone
* Susan B. Anthony
* Frederick Douglass
* Stephen Symonds Foster
* Sojourner Truth