

## CONSTITUTION 101

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Module 13: Voting Rights in America

13.1 Info Brief

### FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

#### QUOTE

“I do not think the mere extension of the ballot a panacea for all the ills of our national life. What we need to-day is not simply more voters, but better voters.”

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Women’s Political Future* (1893)

#### ABOUT FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was a key figure in the fight for universal suffrage. She was born a free black woman in 1825 and was educated in Baltimore. Harper published several books of poetry, three serial novels, and numerous articles in anti-slavery newspapers. Known to many as the mother of African American journalism, her literary works reflected her passion for the cause of abolition and her work helping enslaved people escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad. In 1852, Harper left the South to participate in the abolitionist speaker circuit. During Reconstruction, she advocated for African Americans’ and women’s rights and for educational opportunities for all people.

#### KEY TERMS

- Panacea: A solution to a problem
- Suffrage: The right to vote