



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Senate SJ0001- Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment
Judicial Proceedings Committee – February 21, 2024
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2024 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges you to pass SJ0001, to clearly affirm that the federal Equal Rights Amendment is the 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The fight to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution began over 100 years ago. Now that it has been passed by Congress and fully ratified by the States, it is past time to recognize Maryland's (and all ratifying states') co-equal role in the Article V Amendment process and certify and publish the ERA as the 28th Amendment once and for all.

Marylanders have long been leaders in the battle for gender equality. On May 26, 1972, Maryland became the 18th state to ratify the federal ERA. Later that same year, Maryland enacted its own-state-ERA, incorporating Article 46 into the Maryland Declaration of Rights, which declares, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged or denied because of sex." However, as we've seen, without a federal ERA in our Constitution, our state constitutional protections could be jeopardized by opportunistic meddling by future courts or Congress.

In today's political climate, it's urgent that we secure gender and social equity for all. With the Equal Rights Amendment in our federal Constitution we safeguard abortion care, defeat bans on gender-affirming healthcare and other policies attacking trans people, protect marriage equality across race and gender, close the outrageous gender wage gap, combat violence against women and girls, and so much more.

Equality is the birthright of each and every one of us. We all deserve the unalienable right to live free from sex-based discrimination. At WDC we are unequivocally committed to this cause until the ERA is finally and universally recognized as the law of the land.

We ask for your support for SJ0001 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Tazeen Ahmad
WDC President

Cynthia Rubenstein
Co-Chair
WDC Advocacy Committee