



## Maryland National Organization for Women

P.O. Box 7716 • Silver Spring, MD 20907

info@marylandnow.org • (410) 347-1455

[www.MarylandNOW.org](http://www.MarylandNOW.org)

### House HJ0001 – Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment

Rules & Nominations Committee – March 11, 2024

#### SUPPORT

I am Mary Ann Gorman, Chair of the ERA Task Force for the Maryland chapter of National Organization for Women (Maryland NOW). Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning House Joint Resolution 1. Constitutional equality has been a core issue for NOW since its founding in 1966. Maryland NOW has actively worked with and on behalf of women and LGBTQ+ individuals to strengthen Marylanders' rights to equal pay, autonomous decision making related to reproductive health, same-sex marriage, and much more. Our members have been steadfast in our work to end sexual assault and violence against women. As an organization, for 50 years we have consistently reached out to members of the Maryland General Assembly to offer our members' expertise and resources to assist in your work to advance equality in Maryland.

Thank you, Delegate Patterson and Senator Kelly, for responding to the call of Maryland NOW and 36 other Maryland-based organizations to introduce these ERA-Affirming Resolutions in the General Assembly this session. The ERA has overwhelming bipartisan support among the American public, with over 80% of voters (76% of Republicans and 89% of Democrats) reporting they would like Congress to take action to affirm it as the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment.<sup>1</sup> We are hopeful the Maryland House and Senate committee and floor votes on this resolution will reflect the bipartisan sentiment for constitutional equality held by an overwhelming majority of voters.

The ERA is needed now more than ever due to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in 2022 overruling *Roe v. Wade* and substantially weakening 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment protections from discrimination for women and LGBTQ+ individuals. The ERA not only returns these protections but guarantees and enshrines them as part of the US Constitution. Specific to Marylanders, absent the ERA, federal laws could be enacted that jeopardize or override rights that are guaranteed by our state-level Equal Rights Amendment, including equal pay, contraception, abortion care, gender-affirming care, same sex marriage and intimacy, among others.

According to Article V of the Constitution, the ERA has met all requirements for a constitutional amendment. No federal court has ruled against the validity or merits of the ERA. It is unconscionable that it has not been duly published as part of the US Constitution. It is imperative that the Maryland General Assembly defend its role in the constitutional amendment process and urge the federal government to affirm, certify, and publish the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. Not one more year!

We ask for your support for HJ0001 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

---

<sup>1</sup> Data for Progress, 2022. [https://www.filesforprogress.org/datasets/2022/6/dfp\\_era\\_toplines.pdf](https://www.filesforprogress.org/datasets/2022/6/dfp_era_toplines.pdf)