



Bill No: HJ1
Title: Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment
Committee: March 11, 2024
Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women’s groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW’s purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **HJ1 - Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment** is a priority on the [2024 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

HJ1 expresses the sense of the Maryland Legislature that the federal article of amendment commonly known as the “Equal Rights Amendment” has met all Article V requirements for an amendment to the Constitution of the United States and is valid as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and urges the President and Congress of the United States to affirm the validity of the Equal Rights Amendment and direct the Archivist of the United States to certify and publish the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment without delay.

Marylanders adopted a state-level equal rights amendment in our state constitution in 1972, protecting all Marylanders from discrimination based on sex. Absent the federal Equal Rights Amendment in the United States Constitution, Maryland’s state-level equal rights amendment can be overridden. In addition, state and federal laws advancing sex equality can be readily repealed or replaced, as we have seen recently with federal bills being introduced to prohibit abortion and court decisions prohibiting the sale of abortion medication.

The federal Equal Rights Amendment has met all requirements in the United States Constitution for an amendment having been passed by 2/3 of Congress in 1972 and fully ratified by ¾ of the states in 2020. It is the first fully ratified amendment not to be certified and published as part of the United States Constitution. This resolution reflects the decades-strong collective will of Marylanders for sex equality and sends a strong message to the federal government that, as a ratifying state, the Maryland Legislature expects its constitution powers in the amendment process and to be respected.

This resolution benefits women by sending a clear message to the federal government, other states, and Marylanders themselves that the Maryland Legislature views the federal Equal Rights Amendment as part of the United States Constitution and enforceable as such. The federal Equal Rights Amendment benefits women by:

- making it easier for women who face discrimination on the basis of sex to seek legal recourse;
- giving the United States Congress greater power to enact laws that ensure adequate women’s protection against sexual assault and domestic violence;

- preventing the United States Congress from enacting laws that curtail women's access to medical treatment and infringe upon their civil rights, thus protecting abortion, contraception, equal pay guarantees, no-fault divorce, gender affirming care, marriage equality and a host of other rights; and
- setting a clear expectation of sex equality in all aspects of life and making it a fundamental and irrevocable tenet of society.

Five states have passed resolutions to affirm the federal Equal Rights Amendment, and seven others have introduced such resolutions. According to constitutional law scholars, clear statements by state legislatures could have a strong impact on the final affirmation, certification, publication, and judicial backing of an amendment to the United States Constitution. Maryland women have historically benefited from and will continue to benefit from the leadership role of the Maryland Legislature in the fight for sex equality.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of HJ1.

MLAW 2024 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2024 Legislative Agenda:

1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Garrett Branch
AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch
AAUW Maryland
Adolescent Single Parent Program (PGCPS)
Anne Arundel County Commission for Women
Anne Arundel County NOW
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Black Women for Positive Change, Baltimore Chapter
Bound for Better, Advocates for Domestic Violence
Bound for Better, advocates for Domestic Violence
Business & Professional Women/Maryland
Center for Infant & Child Loss
Child Justice, Inc.
Church Women United, Inc.
Climate XChange Maryland
Court Watch Montgomery
CTLDomGroup Inc
DABS Consulting, LLC
Engage Mountain Maryland
Frederick County Commission For Women
If/When/How at University of Baltimore School of Law
Lee Law, LLC
Les Etoiles in Haiti
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Maryland WISE Women
Miller Partnership Consultants
MomsRising
Montgomery County Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Montgomery County NOW
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Anne Arundel County Chapter
National Organization for Women, Maryland Chapter
Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at UMB
REHarrington Plumbing and Heating
Reproductive Justice Maryland
Stella's Girls Inc
The Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations of Maryland
The Hackerman Foundation
The Relentless Feminist
The Salvation Army Catherine's Cottage
Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Patuxent River
Top Ladies of Distinction, Prince George's County
TurnAround Inc.
University System of Maryland Women's Forum
Women of Action Maryland
Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN)
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporate - Alpha Zeta Chapter
Zonta Club of Annapolis

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

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