

HJ0001 & SJ0001- In Favor

**Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment**

Thank you to the many Bi-Partisan, Co-Sponsors of this Joint Resolution for their efforts & time in support of this important, timely Action.

I am 71 years old. The ERA is viscerally important to me. It is almost too late for me to benefit from this Constitutional Amendment, so this testimonial is on behalf of my middle-age children & young grandchildren. I am a member of League of Women Voters, The American Association of University Women & National Organization for Women, all of whom have vigorously supported the **Equal Rights Amendment** for many years.

My generation suffered through the 1950's, where by the time we had attended kindergarten, we saw on money, TV, in books, sports & shows that girls were confined to "sugar & spice & everything nice". It was scientifically proven, we were told, that women's bodies could not do math, nor athletics. Newspaper Want Ads, positioned right next to the daily "funnies", advertised "Jobs for Women" and "Jobs for Men". The "Jobs for Women" were: "Gal Friday", Teacher & Nurse.

Fortunately for me, my 1950's father was a feminist, having been raised in a large family with a mean father. His mother died after 6 children when the father did not allow her to go to the doctor. His new step-mother then worked her entire life as a nurse, selling eggs on the side, to support the family's 7 children. My (Step) Grandmother was threatened with excommunication by the Catholic Church for considering divorce from the abusive father. She left him anyway to save the children. My father saw the injustice of it all.

So, my brothers & I were raised Quaker. Quakers have been on the right side of social history issues for over 300 years, such as in promoting equal education for girls. Alice Paul, a Quaker, was the author of the **Equal Rights Amendment**, introduced in 1923. By 1972, the ERA finally passed Congress, but the backlash to Women's Rights had already begun. Ronald Reagan had his Department of Education perform computer searches, looking for the terms "Equity" and "Diversity" so that research funding could be specifically cut. Thus, the only study that managed to be completed was American University Myra & David Sadker's "Classroom Effectiveness" study: "Failing at Fairness, How America's Schools Cheat Girls". It was a bombshell, funded in part by AAUW ( American Association of University Women). The Sadkers simply filmed classrooms and counted the micro-interactions between teachers & students. Aghast teachers learned that they were ignoring well-behaved girls & spending the vast bulk of their time teaching the boys. I am forever grateful to AAUW for this data, which received national attention for weeks.

While I was able to study & get a job in architecture, I was denied a credit card at Bloomindales because I did not apply in my husband's name. I have never forgiven them.

I became a mother. When my daughter came home from preschool explaining how difficult it was to protect all the younger children when “the Boys’ Team” attacked “the Girls’ Team”, it was a jolting reminder that nothing much had changed. 1980’s -90’s Teachers insisted that this was “natural” behavior, despite segregating the children by sex for headcount before they went outside to play & for their return. While we were now telling our children that they could “be anything that they wanted to be” the truth of the stacked deck was left unsaid, lest dreams be crushed. Meanwhile, sexist arguments against the ERA were slowly crumbling away (alimony was lost, women were allowed into military service, etc.)

It took 4 decades, but I was able to achieve Vice President of Design & Construction Project Management at the government’s bank, a publicly held Fortune 100 institution with extensive Human Resources rules. Still, just a decade ago, male Leaders of my department ( who all had stay-at home wives) said OUT LOUD that the men needed to be paid more because they were supporting families. (I was doing the same work, commuting 5 hours a day into lower Manhattan to support my family!)

Now I am a grandmother. I excelled at ‘a man’s job’ for decades. In the words of Sojourner Truth, “and aren’t I a woman?” Yet religious and other extremist backlash newly jeopardizes States’ Rights! Maryland’s ERA and other MD Equal Rights, enacted soon after MD ratified the federal ERA in 1972 is now in jeopardy. If Extremists grab control of Congress, they could outlaw Equal Rights in every state via Federal Legislation. The threat is real. Only Certification of the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment will protect our exceptional way of life here in Maryland, and in other states.

On behalf of our next generations of children & grandchildren, thank you for your Bi- Partisan Support to push the Federal Government to completion of the ERA!

There is one truth in an opponent’s speech to the Senate Committee.

Publishing of the Equal Rights Amendment HAS been before the courts already. If the ERA is simply Published by the Archivist, without Congressional removal of its artificial deadline, it will likely be sent directly to our radicalized Supreme Court, who could overturn it and force the process to start over!

The far safer path to Certification is by pending Joint Resolution of Congress to withdraw the artificial deadline!

With Much Appreciation,

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