



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 21st, 2024

**Testimony in Support of SJ1:
Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment**

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Members of the Committee:

SJ1 is a Senate Joint Resolution urging President Biden and his administration to publish the federal Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and for the U.S. Congress to affirm, by joint resolution removing the timeframe for ratification, the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment.

If passed, SJ1 makes known that the General Assembly of Maryland believes that The Equal Rights Amendment meets the requirements of Article V of the Constitution and should be recognized as the 28th Amendment. It also calls on other states to pass similar resolutions.

The Equal Rights Amendment guarantees equal rights for women under the United States Constitution. In 1972, Maryland ratified the federal ERA and adopted a state Equal Rights Amendment into the State's Constitution. Back in 1972, the state ERA was voted on and passed in every County except Garrett. Today, more than 50 years later, polling in support of the federal ERA is overwhelming.

In 2022, Maryland's Attorney General filed an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit brought by three ratifying states to require the Archivist of the United States to certify and publish the Equal Rights Amendment as an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The DC Circuit affirmed Congress's constitutional authority under Article V to resolve legal issues within the ratification process, as it has done for previous amendments to the Constitution.

Five other states, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, and Minnesota have already passed similar resolutions to affirm the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment.

The Maryland General Assembly has dedicated itself to creating and upholding equal protection under the law for all Marylanders. This measure demonstrates this and reaffirms the values of Marylanders.

Today, you will hear from our sponsor panel, including Katie Curran O'Malley, *Executive Director of the Women's Law Center of Maryland*, Tazeen Ahmad, *President of the Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club*, and Jakeya Johnson, *Executive Director of Reproductive Justice Maryland*.

I urge a favorable report on SJ1.