

House Democrats Reaffirm Support for the Equal Rights Amendment

Tomorrow, House Democrats will take up H.J.Res. 79 to reaffirm Congress's support for the Equal Rights Amendment and take an important step toward enshrining women's equality in our Constitution.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

From the wage gap and pregnancy discrimination to sexual harassment and attacks on reproductive health care, women face gender discrimination in many ways. Persistent gender inequality and discrimination impacts women, their families, and our economy:

- On average, a woman still makes [only 82 cents for every dollar](#) earned by her white male equivalent, and that [wage gap widens for women of color](#).
- [Nearly 64 percent of mothers](#) are breadwinners for their families. Fairly compensating these women for their work would have a dramatic impact on their families and children.
- If women earned equal pay for equal work, the poverty rates for both working women and single mothers would be [halved](#), and over [25 million children would benefit](#).
- The wage gap deprives employed women in the U.S. of [\\$900 billion](#) each year, rightfully earned money that could be put back into our economy through spending on goods and services, education, homeownership, and more.
- A [majority of women](#) with young children are in the workforce and are at risk of being placed on unpaid leave or forced out of their jobs due to pregnancy.
- Many Republican state legislatures are enacting laws to take away access to health care and restrict reproductive choice, with the goal of undermining *Roe v. Wade*.
- More than [one in three women](#) have experienced sexual violence, and [up to 85% of women](#) report having experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

ABOUT THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1972 and set a seven-year deadline in the preamble for 38 states to ratify. The deadline was later extended to 1982, at which time 35 states had ratified the amendment. Three states later ratified the amendment: Nevada in 2017, Illinois in 2018, and Virginia in 2020.

The ERA states: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." It would strengthen the Constitutional guarantee for equal rights for women, provide new tools to challenge discrimination, and help close gaps in statutory protections.

ABOUT H.J. RES 79

H.J. RES 79, introduced by Rep. Jackie Speier, removes the arbitrary deadline for ratification of the ERA. The Constitution itself does not contain a deadline for ratification, and House passage of the resolution will reaffirm that Congress strongly supports the ratification of the ERA following ratification by Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia.

The legislation has three Republican co-sponsors, and a companion resolution has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

Women's rights organizations strongly support the resolution and are calling for action to ensure the ERA is ratified:

Ria Tabacco Mar, Director of the ACLU Women's Rights Project: "The House of Representatives lifting the deadline to ratify the ERA is one step toward leaving no doubt that that 'we the people' includes all of us. The vast majority of Americans support the ERA. It's 2020, not 1920. It's long past time to update our laws and policies to make sex equality not only the law, but the reality for people of all genders." [02/12/20]

ERA Coalition: "[Tomorrow] is a momentous day for the Equal Rights Amendment. Our polling shows that 94% of Americans want the Equal Rights Amendment to be part of the Constitution. In 2020, women should no longer be second-class citizens in the United States of America." [2/11/20]

Alejandra Y. Castillo, CEO of YWCA USA: "We've reached a critical moment for women's equality and the work of justice. Women have fought for generations to be recognized in the U.S. Constitution. The passage of the bill to remove the deadline on the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment brings our nation one step closer towards realizing the promise of equality for all. YWCA applauds the House of Representatives for taking bold and decisive action and urges the Senate to act swiftly to continue progress towards ratification of the ERA." [2/12/20]

Toni Van Pelt, President of the National Organization for Women (NOW): "Congress must remove the arbitrary timeline and reaffirm its commitment to the ERA. A democracy that fails to include women in its founding document is a failed democracy." [2/11/20]

Terri Poore, Policy Director of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence: "The research is clear: our efforts to end sexual violence are inextricably linked to women's equality. The Equal Rights Amendment is imperative and long overdue." [2/12/20]