

Bill Summary: H.J.Res. 17/S.J.Res. 1

A joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment

POSITION

For nearly a century, advocates have called for the full equality of women to be acknowledged and protected under the U.S. Constitution. The arguments in favor of the ERA are numerous. As people of faith, we believe first and foremost that the ERA should be the law of the land because equal rights represent the morally virtuous course of action, which respects a fundamental theological truth: that all people are equally valuable in the sight of their Creator, and thus deserve equal regard in human laws and legal systems.

SUPPORTERS:

American Baptist Women's Ministries
Faith in Public Life
Freedom Road
Grace Cathedral, San Francisco
(Bishop, Dean, Chapter & Clergy)
Justice Revival
Loretto Community
Muslims for Progressive Values
Religions for Peace USA
Revolutionary Love
Sojourners
Unitarian Universalist Association
WATER (Women's Alliance for
Theology, Ethics & Ritual)

LEAD SPONSORS

Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA-14)
Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY-23)
Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD)
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

BILL CO-SPONSORS (07.22.21)

HOUSE: 214
SENATE: 4

WHAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD DO:

- This joint resolution eliminates the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, which prohibits discrimination based on sex.
- The amendment was proposed to the states in House Joint Resolution 208 of the 92nd Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on March 22, 1972.
- The amendment shall be part of the Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states. This threshold was met when Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the ERA in January 2020.
- H.J.Res. 17 has already passed in the House with bipartisan support in March of this year;

WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ENACT:

- There should be no time limit on equality. The principle of full inclusion and true equality for all Americans is ultimately a weightier concern than the procedural technicalities currently before the courts. If we operate from our moral core, then our ethical commitment to the ERA as a matter of human rights and equal justice leads us to support its adoption through any and all legal means;
- If we believe our Constitution should be interpreted to guard against sex-based discrimination, then there should be no debate about saying this directly through the ERA;
- U.S. women face a one in three chance of intimate partner violence, similar odds of workplace sexual assault, and a one in five chance of experiencing rape or attempted rape in their lifetimes;
- A 2018 survey named the United States among the ten most dangerous countries in the world for women.
- Although the Equal Protection Clause has been interpreted gradually, case-by-case over the last five decades, to afford some protection against sex discrimination, the Supreme Court still does not apply the same rigorous standard to sex discrimination that is used for racial or religious discrimination.