



Testimony from the National Women's Political Caucus on ERA Enactment

The National Women's Political Caucus—the nation's oldest grassroots multi-partisan organization working to recruit, train and elect pro-choice women at every level of government—has supported and worked for the Equal Rights Amendment since the organization was founded in 1971.

Ratification of the Amendment—which was first proposed 100 years ago—has always been an NWPC “bottom line” issue. The failure of Congress to approve it in 1970 drove our very existence. Our founders understood that more women needed to be elected not just to pass the ERA, but to bring women fully into the political and economic fabric of America. We have worked for over 50 years with many other organizations—not just women's organizations but those committed to equality and justice for ALL Americans—to get the Amendment passed.

For decades, ERA opponents have claimed it isn't necessary. They argue that the 14th Amendment is sufficient to protect the rights of women, but it has never been conclusively adjudicated to include sex as well as race. The only way to fully recognize the legal rights of more than half the nation's population and resist the backlash against the civil rights of women is to put those rights clearly and permanently into the Constitution.

We are frankly tired of waiting for the Equal Rights Amendment. We agree with our partners in the ERA Coalition and Equal Means Equal that *the Amendment has already met the Constitutional requirements for inclusion and should be recognized as such*. Despite the unnecessary and unprecedented requirements for ratification (unlike any other amendment), the ERA was approved by Congress, it was ratified by the required 38 states, and it has been submitted to the Archivist. It should be recognized as the law of the land.

NWPC's purpose is not just to achieve gender parity in public office, both elected and appointed. It is to achieve a democracy that truly represents all its citizens and that ensures the rights of ALL Americans are upheld and their concerns addressed in the public square.

For hundreds of years, our nation has systematically discriminated against women, as it has against people of color.s. The Equal Rights Amendment by itself will not fully correct issues of discrimination and inequality based on sex—but it will give a sound legal test for public policy and a judicial remedy for those who bear the burden of discrimination and inequality. All Americans will be better served by a constitution that includes all of us.

One hundred years after the ERA was first introduced, it is past time. We urge your support for this resolution that will bring the Equal Rights Amendment into the Constitution once and for all.