

The Equal Rights Amendment

“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

The U.S. Constitution currently does not guarantee equal rights for women.

Nothing in the Constitution prohibits the government from rolling back women’s rights. The Fourteenth Amendment has been interpreted by courts as providing some protection, but this interpretation can change as it has in the past. The ERA will be more permanent.

Ratifying the ERA would reflect values of equality and fairness, which run deep in Virginia.

The Virginia Declaration of Rights formed the basis of amendments to the U.S. Constitution introduced by Virginian James Madison, resulting in the Bill of Rights. In addition, Virginia’s state constitution has guaranteed equal rights to Virginia men and women for almost half a century. In light of its history of amendments safeguarding individual rights, Virginia’s history calls for ratification of the ERA.

Equality is important for families and for our economy in this State. Our daughters and their daughters deserve to have the same rights and opportunities as our sons and their sons. Also, another failure to ratify could make this State less attractive to companies deciding where to locate factories and headquarters. Companies increasingly recognize the important role played by women as well as men. Studies by big accounting firms show equitable participation improves predictability and profitability.

The absence of equal rights from the Constitution impairs our reputation in the world.

The United States cannot serve as a beacon for individual rights, liberty, and human dignity if its own Constitution would allow state-sponsored discrimination against its citizens based on their sex.

A state constitution cannot apply to the President or the rest of the federal government.

The Virginia Constitution’s equal rights guarantee cannot protect Virginia women from discrimination by the federal government—for example, if the federal government enacts discriminatory laws or policies. Only a federal ERA can do that.

The federal government should be required to provide the same respect for equality that the Virginia Constitution already guarantees within the Commonwealth. We need the ERA because as Americans, we believe all people are created equal, with the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, and we believe in reasonable checks on governmental power.

The talking points offered by opponents of the ERA are based on misinformation.

The Virginia Constitution has guaranteed equal rights based on sex for 48 years. This has not had any of the negative effects that ERA opponents are warning against. It is time to stand up for half of our population against discrimination that does not serve a compelling governmental purpose.

The time has finally come for the Equal Rights Amendment.

As of today, 37 of the necessary 38 states have ratified it. Virginia could become the 38th. One additional state ratification will set the stage to make the ERA part of the U.S. Constitution.

PLEASE VOTE YES ON RATIFICATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT