

## **EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (ERA)**

**Some History:** The first version of the Equal Rights Amendment was submitted to Congress in 1923, three years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. The current ERA was passed in Congress in 1972, followed swiftly by 35 state ratifications for the ERA. Alaska was one of the first states to ratify the amendment in 1972. Then a lawyer named Phyllis Schlafly started the STOP ERA campaign, a successful effort unfortunately. It was 48 years before three more states voted to ratify for the needed 38 states.

Unfortunately Congress placed an arbitrary deadline on the ERA for ratification and extended that deadline once. However, not all amendments have had such deadlines affixed to them. For example, the 27th Amendment was submitted in the First Congress in 1790. It did not become part of the Constitution until 1992--202 years later. The ERA bill (S.J.Res 6) is now in the Senate (having passed the House) in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Alaska's Senator Murkowski is one of its co-sponsors.

**Why is this bill important?**

- 1. This bill enshrines in the U. S. Constitution the concept of equal rights in spite of sex. No other Amendment addresses the concept that equality of rights shall not be abridged or denied on account of sex.**
- 2. Women have made great strides but they still are victims of unequal pay, workplace harrassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, and limited access to comprehensive health care.**
- 3. Some argue that the 14th Amendment protects women's rights, but the need to pass the 19th Amendment (when women won the right to vote) contradicts the supposed protections for women in the 14th Amendment--this Amendment did nothing to protect a woman's right to vote.**
- 4. Today women work in many occupations and they make up a high number of first responders and primary caregivers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. They deserve the same civil rights protections as men.**
- 5. The ERA can enhance children's lives, both male and female. Many women are the sole breadwinners in families of young children. If they continue to receive salaries that equal less than males, the children under their care suffer also.**
- 6. The ERA Coalition shows that 97% of Democrats and 90% of Republicans support the Amendment.**

Read more here: ERA Coalition: [www.eracoalition.org](http://www.eracoalition.org)

And here: <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/equal-rights-amendment-explained>