



## **FEW Fact Sheet**

### **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)**

**Background:** It has been a very long road for the ERA. 95 years ago, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was first proposed and introduced to Congress by suffragist leader, Alice Paul. Almost 50 years later the ERA was passed by Congress and sent to the states with a seven-year ratification deadline, which was later extended to ten years. However, the Amendment fell three states short of ratification, and today there remains no Equal Rights Amendment in the U.S., despite it being reintroduced to Congress every session since not being ratified by the states in 1982.

#### ***A New Era for the ERA***

FEW thanks Representatives Carolyn Maloney, for leading the charge in the House on **HJ Res 38**, which currently has **193 cosponsors**.

In April 2019, Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) held the first official hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on the Equal Rights Amendment in 36 years!

Women have made incredible progress in the past thirty-five years, but unfortunately judicial attitudes can shift, and Congress can repeal existing laws with a simple majority vote. In recent years, there have been efforts to roll back women's rights in education, health, employment, and even domestic violence.

FEW thanks Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Lisa Murkowski for leading the charge in the Senate on **SJ Res 6**. These senators are co-sponsors of **Senate Joint Resolution 6**, which, if passed in tandem with Rep. Jackie Speier's **House Joint Resolution 38**, would remove the deadline, leading to a clear path for ratification of the ERA, which aims to amend the constitution to provide equal protection under the law regardless of sex.

The following Senate cosponsors include:

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

Senator Angus King (I-ME)

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

**FEW's Position:** FEW supports Senate Joint Resolution 6 and House Resolution 38, a joint resolution that **will remove the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.**



FEW encourage Senators to cosponsor this important resolution and vote to pass it expeditiously.

The ERA Amendment is *one state away* from reaching that two-thirds threshold. FEW believes that it's not a matter of if, but *when* the 38th state will ratify the ERA. The states that are close are Virginia and Arizona.

### **TALKING POINTS:**

- An ERA will give all citizens the opportunity to reach their full potential. Women and men must have equal rights for a democracy to thrive.
- Ensures that government programs and federal resources benefit men and women equally.
- An ERA will put women on equal footing in the legal systems of all 50 states, particularly in areas where women have historically been treated as second-class citizens, including in cases of public education, divorce, child custody, domestic violence, and sexual assault.
- Women are still not receiving equal pay for equal work. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women on average earn only 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man.
- Passing an ERA will put the full weight of the U.S. Constitution behind employment laws relating to the prevention of sex discrimination in hiring, firing, promotions, and benefits – especially in the public sector.
- An ERA will eliminate sex discrimination in the armed services and ensure that government programs, such as Social Security, do not have a disparate negative impact on women.
- Pregnancy discrimination continues to be prevalent in the workforce. An ERA can protect women from being harmed by a policy simply because she is a woman.
- The 14th amendment is not enough. Only an ERA would provide for gender equity and offer an “overriding guarantee” of equal protection for women.