



ONE MORE STATE
to ratify the
Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

**VIRGINIA,
Let's Make History!**

THE GAME PLAN

The next Virginia General Assembly session will begin in early January 2019 and will last just 45 days. During that time, we'll need House and Senate leadership to allow a floor vote and we'll need to maintain the majority support we achieved in the full House and Senate in 2018. In past years, we've come close. This coming year, with your help, we will succeed!

Between now and next January, organizations across the Commonwealth will be educating and raising awareness among voters, attracting legislative and media attention to our issue, and amplifying the voices of constituents in key districts. In January, we'll be in Richmond, working together to convince Senate and House leadership to do what is right and long overdue.

As we do this work, here are some key things to keep in mind. Our approach should be:

- **Inclusive:** The gender equity gap is most severe for women of color. Boys and men are also impacted by the gender equity gap, whether they have employed mothers or are married to a woman who is underpaid. Ratification of the ERA will benefit EVERYONE.
- **Bipartisan:** Success requires the support of Republican leadership. We need voters across the political spectrum to get involved and contact their lawmakers.
- **Single-issue:** Keep ERA ratification front and center, separate from other issues you are working on. Do not wear or bring accessories or materials for other groups or issues when you work on the ERA.

GET INVOLVED

- **Spread the word** — most people don't know that gender equality is not yet in the Constitution! Talk to your friends, neighbors, and family members. Wear your pin! Tell people you meet around town.
- **Build a team** — create your own local ERA committee and make a plan to build ERA awareness in your area. We will support you every step of the way!
- **Get connected** — to access online resources, join ERA mailing lists, and coordinate with partners statewide, visit VAratifyERA.org.



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WE STILL NEED THE ERA

Over 90% of Americans agree that the Constitution should guarantee equal rights regardless of gender.

Over 70% of Americans believe it already does.

IT DOES NOT!

That's right! Gains in women's rights — the right to own property, the right to work, the right to an education, the right to participate in sports — have been made through policies and legislation, **which can be repealed**. Women's only explicitly stated right in the Constitution is the right to vote.

The *Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)* states: **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 ERA will create a **permanent, uniform, and national standard for eliminating sex discrimination** by government at all levels and would ensure gender discrimination receives the same level of judicial review as discrimination based on race and religion. Without this guarantee, women in the U.S. do not have Constitutional equality. Laws furthering women's rights, such as the Violence Against Women Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, can be repealed by a simple majority vote in Congress.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report, which looks at economic, education, health, and political equity measures, **the United States ranks 49th out of 144 countries in gender equity**. In fact, 84% of the 197 constitutions in place worldwide explicitly guarantee gender equality. **Ours does not.**

ERA HISTORY

The ERA was introduced in Congress in 1923 and every year thereafter. In 1972, Congress finally passed the ERA and set a 7-year ratification deadline, later extended to 10 years. In 1982, 35 states had ratified the ERA, just 3 states short of the required 3/4 of states.

The deadline passed, but Congress can remove or extend it. The ERA lives on! On March 22, 2017, 45 years to the day after Congress passed the ERA, Nevada became the 36th state to ratify. **On May 30, 2018, Illinois became the 37th**. Virginia is well-positioned to be the 38th state, and is considered the next most likely state to ratify.

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