



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thousands of Virginians set to welcome back lawmakers, and observe Senate Committee hearing on Equal Rights Amendment January 9th

Wednesday, January 9th marks the opening of the 400th General Assembly session in Virginia. Constituents from around the state will be arriving by bus, train and carpool to welcome their lawmakers and advocate for bills and resolutions. One of the most visible groups will be equality advocates pushing for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which has the support of 81% of Virginians according to a December 5th Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University [poll](#). Adding to the excitement, equality advocates will be able to observe the Senate committee vote on the resolution, which seeks to add gender equality to the U. S. Constitution.

Kati Hornung, VAratifyERA Campaign Coordinator, learned the news over the weekend: “Virginians are pleased that Senator Norment has assigned the Equal Rights Amendment to the Senate Privilege & Elections Committee where it has passed five times since 2011. We are even more thrilled that Committee Chair, Senator Jill Vogel (R) has docketed the resolution for the first day of session, January 9th, when hundreds of constituents from across the state will be at the Capitol to welcome back our lawmakers. Virginia added the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, and we want the same honor for the Equal Rights Amendment as the 38th state. This week will be pivotal in the march towards gender equality, and we invite supporters to join us at the Capitol Wednesday, and throughout session. ”

On the eve of the historic session, Tuesday, January 8th, supporters will be kicking-off the push for ratification with a free screening of “RBG,” sponsored by VAratifyERA at the Byrd Theatre in Carytown. The free, encore screening of the documentary on Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg will be hosted by Senator Jennifer McClellan with special guests: Illinois Senator (and Norfolk State graduate) Pat Spearman who put the ERA back into headlines with the state’s ratification in March of 2017; House ERA Bill Chief Patron Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy, Delegate Hala Ayala and Senator Scott Surovell will also speak. [RBG Encore Screening](#), FREE, January 8th, 7:30pm at the Byrd Theatre 2908 W. Cary Street Richmond VA. Doors open at 7pm. For more events, including the ticketed Party4Parity, go to varatifyera.org/ga2019.

Constitutional scholars and legal professionals across the country assert that Virginia has the power to ratify the amendment, and should do so. Justices Antonia Scalia and Ruth Bader Ginsburg both noted that gender is not protected in the Constitution as does the 400,000 member American Bar Association (ABA) which sent letters to house and senate leadership on Jan. 2 [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring submitted a [formal opinion](#) last year underscoring the Commonwealth’s ability to ratify, noting the recent ratifications of Nevada (March 2017) and Illinois (May 2018). [Statewide localities and organizations](#) ranging from Blacksburg and Norfolk City Councils to NAACP of Virginia and even the statewide Parent Teachers Association have joined the chorus calling for elected leaders to ratify the amendment.

For more information on the Equal Rights Amendment and Virginia’s campaign, visit www.VAratifyERA.org. To follow the campaign, visit VAratifyERA on Facebook, Twitter and instagram.

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