

ERA

Do You Know . . .
WHAT It Means ?

The proposed 27th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, known as the “Equal Rights Amendment” will invalidate all state and federal laws which impose different obligations on men and women:

ERA will invalidate all state laws which require a husband to support his wife. These laws, designed to protect the most important unit of society, the FAMILY, will be replaced by a new principle making women EQUALLY liable for financial responsibilities. The stability of families will be undermined by this drastic change in wives’ legal status.

ERA will wipe out state laws that exempt a wife from her husband’s debts even if the husband has deserted her and she has children to support.

ERA will repeal all anti-abortion laws, and deprive congress and the state legislatures of their right to enact future anti-abortion laws or laws regulating abortion.

ERA will harm divorced women by wiping out any presumption of child custody - or alimony - even for senior women. Orders for child support will be even harder to enforce.

ERA will require 18 year-old girls to register with the military lottery system - the draft - along with the boys.

ERA will take away congress’ right to exempt women if it should become necessary to draft men.

ERA will not allow special treatment for women in the army. Unlike Israeli women who are drafted for shorter terms of non-combat duty in separate units, American women will be equally obligated to serve in combat units and on warships.

ERA will wipe out state labor laws and guidelines which benefit women in industry who do heavy, manual work.

- ERA** will take away the right of a wife or widow to receive social security benefits based on her husband's earnings.
- ERA** will take broad legislative powers away from the state legislatures, and transfer them to congress and the federal courts, which are LEAST responsive to public opinion:



- ERA** will not give women "equal pay for equal work". ERA can add nothing to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and a multitude of federal and state laws and executive orders in regard to employment.
- ERA** will not improve present educational opportunities for women which have already been mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and H.E.W. regulations.
- ERA** will not protect privacy between the sexes in hospitals, prisons, schools, or public accommodations.
- ERA** will not wipe out discrimination against women in getting credit. This has recently been ordered by the Depository Institutions Amendments of 1974.
- ERA** will not automatically extend women's benefits to men. Courts do not write laws, but they do strike them down.
- ERA** will not, as proponents say "give" women the right to serve on juries...start a business...get a mortgage...control their own property...or become "mature, adult persons" under the law. All these things were made possible YEARS ago.



The Proposed Amendment To The U.S. Constitution Reads:

- SEC. 1 Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.**
- SEC. 2 The congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.**
- SEC. 3 This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.**

Unlike the Women's Suffrage Amendment which gave women the vote, the language of the ERA is vague and undefined. It will be up to the federal courts of the future to decide what it means.

The strict "no exceptions allowed" wording of the ERA cannot be amended after final passage by the congress and ratification by 38 states, except by the same cumbersome constitutional amendment process. Supreme court decisions that run contrary to public opinion cannot be changed like state or federal laws.

It is wishful thinking for proponents to say that nothing harmful will come of the ERA, since no one can guarantee or reverse the outcome of the Supreme Court decision.

When there is so much to lose, why should women bet their most important rights and benefits on the obscure ERA? It makes much more sense to deal with specific problems with specific laws.



During most of the 23 years the Equal Rights Amendment was under consideration by congress, and at the time it was passed by the House Judiciary Committee, it included a special protective clause which would have PRESERVED WOMEN'S EXEMPTION from the draft, and other rights and benefits for the health and safety of the people. (The Wiggins Modification)

Many prominent people endorsed the ERA when the protective Wiggins Clause was still a part of the proposed amendment.

However, because of the agitation of feminists, the Wiggins Clause was PERMANENTLY STRICKEN. Clearly, this means that women WILL be subject to a future draft law, and will lose important women's rights and benefits they can count on now.

38 states are required to ratify the ERA by 1979. If your state has not ratified, be sure to support the legislators who oppose ERA. If your state has voted to ratify, ask your legislators to join Nebraska and Tennessee in rescinding that vote.



“My view that the ERA is the most destructive piece of legislation to ever pass congress still stands and I am hopeful that it will be defeated in the states”...Senator Sam J. Ervin, U.S. Senate.

The Equal Rights Amendment “would minimize legal reinforcement of cultural mores supportive of family life”...Arthur E. Ryman, Jr., Drake University.

“Under the guise of equality, the proposed ‘Equal Rights Amendment’ would in reality wipe out the many legal safeguards which protect woman’s position in the family. Because it proposes an idea of women foreign to the Christian concept of woman’s co-equal, but individual, dignity with man ...we

oppose the proposed “Equal Rights Amendment’ ”. National Council of Catholic Women Resolution, 1973.

“Not only would women, including mothers be subject to the draft, but the military would be compelled to place them in combat units alongside of men...in some cases it could relieve the fathers of the primary responsibility for the support of even infant children, as well as the support of the mothers of such children”...U.S. House Judiciary Committee Report (No.92-359, July 14, 1971).

“I refuse to allow the glad-sounding ring of an easy slogan to victimize millions of women and children”...Congressman Emanuel Celler, U.S. House of Representatives.

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