

The ERA: It's Time

At this summer's LWVUS convention in Chicago I was among the delegates who unanimously added ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to our national advocacy priorities. I was surprised, but delighted, to learn that there was a movement afoot in several states, including South Carolina, to reach the 38th state threshold for the ERA to become the law of the land.

Although passing a ratification bill in South Carolina is not among LWVSC's legislative priorities, it is deserving of our support as individual constituents.

Thanks to the efforts of the Charleston League and its member Barbara Fry, who leads the Equal Means ERA Coalition, my local League and I have become educated as to why it's important to take action.

Many people may feel that women already have equal rights and are not aware that the word "woman" appears nowhere in the US Constitution. Even though some laws have been passed that are favorable to women, such laws vary from state to state and can be rescinded in just one election.

Among the compelling reasons to ratify the ERA are the needs for

- pay equity
- healthcare and insurance coverage equity
- protection of reproductive choices
- protection against domestic violence
- alleviation of poverty
- legal protection as a class against discrimination

Even though women won resounding victories in the 2018 mid-term elections, women still only represent 24 percent of the US Congress. Isn't about time that 51 percent of the population have equal representation and the same rights as the other 49 percent?

As we approach the 100th anniversary of both the 19th Amendment and the founding of the League of Women Voters, the time is ripe for fulfilling the vision of our foremothers. To learn more, visit EqualMeansEqual.org and join Equal Means ERA on Facebook.

--Nancy Williams, Co-President
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Area

294 words

Sidebar: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."