

100 years strong, the Equal Rights Amendment's centennial marks a new intersectional era

ERA advocates gathered to celebrate its centennial and embrace a more inclusive movement for equality that champions the rights of all genders.

SENECA FALLS, NEW YORK, USA, July 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- To mark the 100th birthday of the [Equal Rights Amendment \(ERA\)](#), hundreds of equal rights activists gathered at the ERA Centennial Convention to reaffirm their determination to secure the ERA's place as the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution and to commit to a new set of guiding values that will underpin the final push to secure its successful passage through Congress.



ERA Centennial Convention Seneca Falls, New York, July 22, 2023, Photo credit - Equality Now

The event was held at Seneca Falls, New York, in the same red-brick church where a century

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Equality Now

before, the ERA was first introduced by the National Women's Party on July 22, 1923. The ERA seeks to guarantee equal rights and legal protections in the US, regardless of gender, and legally prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. It would provide a firm legal foundation to address gender-based discrimination in all aspects of society and ensure both men and women enjoy the same fundamental rights under the law.

In addition to honoring this significant milestone in the ERA's journey, attendees celebrated the transformative shift to a more inclusive, intersectional movement for

equality that champions the rights of all genders, inclusive of women and those from

marginalized communities. Today's ERA advocates are embracing a new set of values to govern their youth-led, multiethnic, intersectional approach to achieving equality in the US, namely:

- * Abortion is a human right
- * The ERA is queer and must center transgender lives
- * The ERA is intersectional and committed to anti-racism
- * Economic justice is gender justice
- * The ERA respects religious pluralism
- * The ERA movement must challenge discrimination against all



ERA Centennial Convention Seneca Falls, New York, July 22, 2023. Photo credit - Equality Now

ROLLBACK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women's rights have been under increasingly sustained attack. Nowhere is this more evident than with sexual and reproductive rights, which have been curtailed in many states over the past few years following the ruling by the US Supreme Court in the case of *Dobbs v Jackson*, with the Court decreeing that the US Constitution does not confer a right to abortion.

In 2023, almost five hundred anti-LGBTQ+ bills* have been introduced in various state legislatures, according to ACLU, with over 70 laws passed. Twenty-two states now have laws banning transgender youth, and in some places adults, from accessing critical, gender-affirming medical care.

These rollbacks and the introduction of new discriminatory laws were made possible because existing constitutional provisions do not provide sufficient protection to uphold equality on the basis of sex. Many are concerned about what other rights are at risk of being revoked, and this is giving greater urgency in the push for legal protections to be anchored in the highest law of the land.

Based on the language used in the amendment's original drafting in 1923, the ERA should protect all women, marginalized groups, and LGBTQ+ people from sex-based discrimination and require strict scrutiny in cases where their fundamental human rights have been violated.

Legislatively, the ERA would empower Congress to pass federal laws to address systemic gender discrimination and inequality, leveling the playing field for women and girls, especially women of color and other historically marginalized groups. It should also make it easier for the courts to challenge existing sex-discriminatory laws based on stereotypes.

THE US IS VIOLATING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

It is high time the US acknowledged that it is falling short in meeting its international legal obligations to ensure constitutional equality for all citizens. Without legal equality on the basis of sex and/or gender guaranteed in the Constitution, the US is in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a treaty that commits nations, including the US, to ensure equality between women and men (Art. 3) and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex (Art. 26).

The US is the only established democracy in the world that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women and girls around the world. It is also the only country that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which identifies the rights of every child, regardless of their sex, race, religion, or abilities.

The lack of constitutional equality infringes upon the fundamental international human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. Without equality on the basis of sex under the law, women, girls, and other marginalized groups are left vulnerable to numerous forms of gender-based discrimination in areas such as employment, education, and reproductive healthcare.

Congresswoman Cori Bush of Missouri attended the ERA centennial on her birthday, declaring, "My birthday wish is that the struggle ends now."

Earlier in July, [Rep. Bush filed a joint resolution](#) with Senator Gillibrand of New York aimed at affirming the ERA, just months after creating the first-ever ERA Congressional Caucus with her colleague Ayanna Pressley. Rep. Pressley's [discharge petition](#) will hopefully bring the US one step closer to realizing Rep Bush's wish of achieving constitutional equality for all.

"This is the first time two women are lead sponsors of ERA legislation to certify and publish the ERA. We are just one signature away from equality!" Rep. Bush added.

In our pursuit of constitutional equality, Equality Now urges lawmakers and decision-makers to honor the US's international obligations and work collaboratively to ensure that the ERA is finally enshrined in the Constitution. This landmark amendment will solidify the nation's commitment to equal rights and create a society that embraces diversity, inclusivity, and equality under the law.

The centennial marks both a celebration of the dedication and determination of equal rights advocates and a call to action for the road ahead. The next stage of the movement must be inclusive and representative of all of those involved. For more information on the history and future direction of the ERA, visit the www.eracoalition.org.

Notes to editors:

Founded in 1992, Equality Now is an international human rights organization that works to protect and promote the rights of all women and girls around the world. Our campaigns are centered on four program areas: Legal Equality, End Sexual Violence, End Harmful Practices, and End Sexual Exploitation, with a cross-cutting focus on the unique needs of adolescent girls. Equality Now combines grassroots activism with international, regional, and national legal advocacy to achieve legal and systemic change to benefit all women and girls and works to ensure that governments enact and enforce laws and policies that uphold their rights.

* For more information on attacks on LGBTQ+ Rights in the US State Legislatures, check out ACLU's tracking of anti-LGBTQ bills at www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights#categories.

And for more information on how the ERA would help protect LGBTQ+ rights, go to Equality Now's ERA LGBTQ+ factsheet at <https://www.equalitynow.org/resource/i-need-the-era-because-lgbtq-rights-are-human-rights/>

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