

The Unfulfilled Promise of Equal Rights for Women and Girls in the U.S.

From awareness to action - the role of journalists in advancing the Equal Rights Amendment to protect the human rights of women and girls in the United States.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA, July 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While the United States celebrates Independence Day, many Americans remain unaware that the human rights of women and girls are not explicitly secured in the U.S. Constitution. As a consequence, across the nation, women and girls continue to face sex discrimination in laws and unprecedented moves to roll back on their fundamental human rights.



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

The [Equal Rights Amendment \(ERA\)](#) offers a much-needed solution by providing a constitutional guarantee of equality that would deliver more robust legal protection.

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Equality Now

Enshrining the ERA within the U.S. Constitution would enable women to invoke the Constitution's explicit prohibition of sex discrimination and would empower Congress to enact more comprehensive legal protections for women and girls across numerous sectors, such as reproductive healthcare and employment.

To help achieve this essential remedy, Equality Now is launching a new resource to assist journalists and others in communicating effectively about the ERA. [Reporting on the Equal Rights Amendment: A Toolkit for Journalists](#)

contains in-depth insights from legal experts on various ways the ERA can strengthen the rights of women and girls in the U.S. in all their diversity, including those from marginalized

communities who are particularly vulnerable.

THE ERA WOULD PROTECT AGAINST SEX DISCRIMINATION

For over a century, activists have advocated for constitutional protections for sex and gender to be elevated to the same status as protections guaranteed for race, religion, and national origin.

The ERA's proposed wording, first drafted in 1923, 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 Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

By adopting this simple, 52-word amendment, the U.S. government has the power to eliminate sex discrimination from the nation's laws. Once enshrined as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution, the ERA would protect hard-won women's rights and freedoms, ensuring they are not compromised by opportunistic administrations and politicians.

As the Constitution currently does not explicitly ban discrimination based on sex or gender, it has been easier to strip away legal rights, and the risk is greater of new discriminatory laws being introduced.

Presently, there are 14 states that have introduced near-total abortion bans. Women need constitutional protections for their rights, especially regarding sexual and reproductive healthcare.

Without the essential legal protections the ERA offers, women and gender minorities in the U.S. have fewer opportunities, less freedom, and poorer outcomes compared to men in areas ranging from education and employment to health service provision and overall well-being.

There is still no universal paid family leave, and women working full-time and year-round earn, on average, just [84 cents to every dollar earned by a man](#). For women of color, the gender pay gap is even wider.

PROTECTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS WITH THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

As the fight for gender equality continues to evolve, the ERA is a key legislative tool that has already brought substantial protection when introduced at the state level. A recent example is in Pennsylvania and Nevada, where in May 2024, the State Supreme Courts overturned the ban on Medicaid-funded abortion, citing that equal legal rights, regardless of sex, must be upheld.

Introducing the ERA at the federal level would help address long-standing disparities in a wide range of areas, including pay equity, healthcare access, violence against women and girls, and workplace discrimination.

For the ERA to become the 28th Amendment to the Constitution, it must be ratified by three-fourths of U.S. states. In January 2020, Virginia became the 38th state out of 50 to formally approve and adopt the proposed amendment, bringing it across the threshold. Despite this, the ERA has yet to be published or incorporated into the U.S. Constitution.

Journalists play a crucial role in advancing the ERA by raising public awareness about its potential to safeguard women's rights. Equality Now's new reporting toolkit, crafted by women's rights experts and legal scholars, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and communicating the ERA's significance, particularly in relation to intersectional rights. The toolkit covers key aspects, including:

- * Historical context - a summary of the ERA's journey and key milestones.
- * Current landscape - information on sex discrimination affecting people in the U.S. and intersectional issues linked to the ERA.
- * International outlook - how the ERA could help the US fulfill its international human rights legal obligations.

While the principles of liberty and justice are celebrated in the U.S., it is crucial to acknowledge that these ideals remain unfulfilled for many. We cannot afford to wait another century to secure equal rights for women and gender minorities. The time to act is now. To achieve true independence for all, journalists, policymakers, and everyday citizens must unite to champion the Equal Rights Amendment.

About: Equality Now is a feminist organization using the law to protect and promote the human rights of all women and girls. Our mission is to achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world. Since 1992, our international network of lawyers, activists, and supporters have held governments responsible for ending legal inequality, sexual exploitation, sexual violence, and harmful practices. We aim to live our mission through the feminist principles of equality, anti-discrimination, inclusion, autonomy, and dignity.

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