

Equal Rights Amendment Ratification in Virginia, 2018

This winter, Virginians have a unique opportunity to bring a momentous, long-needed advancement in women's rights nationwide by ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment. We must act quickly to get the Virginia General Assembly to take action, because their 2018 session ends in March.

BACKGROUND

The US Constitution does not provide for protection against discrimination based on sex. Gains in women's rights have been made through federal laws, which can be repealed. The only right women have explicitly stated in the Constitution is the right to vote. [Learn More](#)

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) would fix this. It 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 first version of this amendment was introduced in Congress in 1923, and every year after, until it finally passed in 1972. It was ratified by 35 states, just 3 short of the required two-thirds of states, before the 1982 deadline passed and the effort failed. [Learn More](#)

WHAT NOW

There is still an opportunity to finish this work. According to the three-state strategy, three more states could ratify the amendment, which would become binding when Congress extends the ratification deadline again (it had originally been extended by 3 years). Proponents of this strategy argue that there is legal precedent for such an approach. [Learn More](#)

In March, Nevada became the 36th state to ratify! [Learn More](#) The remaining 14 states that have not ratified the amendment include Virginia, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah.

In Virginia, federal constitutional amendments are ratified by the General Assembly. Proponents of the amendment submit bills to complete this process every year, but they typically die in committees and subcommittees, particularly in the House.

The 2018 General Assembly session is an opportunity to build on the momentum created by Nevada's ratification to finally ratify the amendment in Virginia! [Learn More](#)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

We need to let our delegates and senators know that this issue matters to us. Early lobbying will focus on the Senate Rules Committee and the House Privileges and Elections Committee, where the Senate and House bills, respectively, currently sit. To get involved in this effort:

- Get involved with [Equal Rights Amendment: VA Next to Ratify](#) and [Charlottesville NOW](#). If you are part of an organization that would like to join in this effort, contact us at charlottesvillenow@gmail.com.
- Contact your legislators and let them know this matters to you.
- Organize a [postcard-writing event](#) and invite your friends and community members.
- Participate in the lobbying days ([1/22](#) and [1/25 and 1/26](#)) in Richmond.
- Spread the word!