



May 20, 2021

To: Members of the U.S. Senate

From: Virginia Kase, CEO League of Women Voters

Re: Passing S.J. Res. 1, Removing the ratification timeline on the ERA

The League of Women Voters encourages you to move forward with passage of S.J. Res. 1. This resolution will eliminate the timeline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). It passed with bipartisan support in the House and the resolution in the Senate is led by Senator Murkowski and Senator Cardin. Women gained the right to vote over 100 years ago and now it is time to ensure equality for women in the U.S. Constitution.

Despite the significant legal and legislative advances that have been made in recent decades, women continue to face discrimination on the basis of sex. The symptoms of this systemic discrimination are clear in the ongoing fights against unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, and limited access to comprehensive healthcare. It is not enough to treat the symptoms; we must address the root cause of inequality by amending the Constitution.

The ERA momentum is not new. In 2018, the ratification by Illinois and Nevada propelled this legislative initiative from being one state away to achieving the 38-state threshold for ratification. In 2020, Virginia became the final state needed to ratify the ERA. Passing S.J. Res. 1 and removing the timeline would ensure that work done by state legislatures to move this important amendment forward is not done in vain.

Congress has a clearly established basis for their authority to extend or remove the time limit from the resolving clause of the Equal Right Amendment. The idea of time limits on constitutional amendments is a modern congressional addition to the amendment ratification process. Prior to the twentieth century, there was no discussion of imposing a time constraint on the states' consideration of a proposed amendment. Congress derives its power to set a time limit from its authority to designate a mode of ratification.

S.J. Res. 1 is vital to ensuring that final ratification of the ERA is achieved over the course of the next year. As an organization that defends democracy, the League of Women Voters believes that there cannot be a time limit on establishing equality and final ratification of the ERA is needed to ensure equal rights for all regardless of sex or gender. As a country we are on the cusp of a victory for this long-awaited amendment. Congress must do the work to eliminate the timeline, so that when the amendment is fully ratified it can go into effect immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Virginia Kase". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Virginia Kase
CEO, League of Women Voters of the United States