



**EQUAL  
MEANS  
EQUAL**

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## **THE EQUAL MEANS EQUAL CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND + LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVE**

The Equal Means Equal Campaign for Equal Rights (#EqualMeansEqual) is a public information campaign and social media movement (with in-person programming accompaniment) supporting the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA is a proposed amendment that would blanket all sex-based protections into the U.S. Constitution itself. Ratification of the ERA would ensure—on a constitutional level—fundamentals like equal pay and the prohibition of sex discrimination. The ERA, which has been floating around since the 1920s and awaiting state-level ratification since 1972, simply says:

**“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”**

In other words: “Everyone should have equal rights.” Nothing more, nothing less. It seems obvious, but here’s why it hasn’t passed yet: while the ERA is not inherently a partisan matter (it has the official support of legislators on both sides of the aisle), some conservative social campaigns have emphatically linked the ERA’s simple language to reproductive rights and an ‘attack on family values.’ ERA advocates have been in an uphill battle ever since things were politicized in this way.

More information on the background and status of the ERA is at the bottom of the page, but here’s a basic overview of #EqualMeansEqual’s specific legislative objective: Only *one more state’s* ratification is required for the ERA to pass by way of a three-quarters (38-state) majority. #EqualMeansEqual seeks the public’s influence to raise awareness and ultimately target legislators in the 13 unratified states (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, and Virginia) so that Americans of all identities can live in a country where civil rights may not be denied on the basis of one’s sex. As soon as just one of these states ratifies the ERA, it will be automatically incorporated into the Constitution.

The Equal Means Equal Campaign for Equal Rights (#EqualMeansEqual) is a project from civil rights organization Equal Means Equal, a wing of the 501(c)(3) Heroica Foundation. Its founder and executive director is Kamala Lopez, who in 2016 released the seminal ERA film, *Equal Means Equal*, executive produced by Patricia Arquette. The #EqualMeansEqual campaign has a dedicated team set up for it to continue until the ERA is passed.

### **MORE INFORMATION ON THE ERA’S BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS**

The Equal Rights Amendment was approved by Congress in the early 1970s but, in 1972 (due to a conservative social campaign spearheaded by Phyllis Schlafly that spread rhetoric about the ERA damaging “traditional” family structures and threatening to diminish the ubiquity of the housewife), the amendment unexpectedly failed to clear the final step required for implementation in the U.S. Constitution: three quarters of states (38 of 50) needed to approve the amendment by way of a state-level vote. Since then, ERA advocates have worked to combat various congressionally imposed deadlines and to painstakingly lobby state-by-state to reach the three-quarters/38-state majority.

Aided by recent cultural support of the Women’s Marches and the MeToo/TimesUp movements, as well as past and present public encouragement from powerhouses like Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the late Shirley Chisholm, the ERA has experienced a political resurgence as it inches toward its final hurdle for Constitutional implementation. In 2017, Nevada became the first state in forty years to approve the ERA; in April of 2018, Illinois became the 37th state, leaving just one more required for passage. If a single additional state approves the ERA, it will automatically be recorded to the Constitution, with no precedent for the possibility of Executive intervention.