



PRESS RELEASE

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### **Congresswomen Renew Interest in the Equal Rights Amendment**

#### ***Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) Reintroduce Legislation to add Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution***

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 29, 2019 -- With the Equal Rights Amendment resurgent once again, Congresswomen Jackie Speier and Carolyn Maloney have filed legislation to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, including legislation to lift a deadline for ratification.

Rep. Speier's introduction of the joint resolution to remove the ratification deadline, HJ Res 38, on the 1972 Equal Rights Amendment comes at a time when the Virginia House of Delegates is considering whether to be the 38th and final state needed to ratify the amendment. Virginia's Senate approved the ERA earlier this month with bipartisan support.

"We're on the precipice of a historic moment. Women are no longer required to have a man co-sign to get a credit card or prohibited from serving on a jury, but sex and gender discrimination persists. We see it in the form of pay inequality, pregnancy discrimination, the pink tax, and the rampant plague of sexual harassment and violence in our boardrooms, breakrooms, classrooms, and on the battle field," **Rep. Speier** said. "If equality is truly an American value it's time for our founding document to reflect that value. With only one state needed to fulfill the requirement set in 1972, the time is ripe for ratification of the ERA. It's time to reset the clock so that women will finally be equal to men under the eyes of the law."

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) filed a companion bill, SJ Res 6, on January 25<sup>th</sup>. This extraordinary bipartisan support Congress signals the final stretch for the ratification of ERA, originally drafted in 1923 but has not yet received approval by three-fourths of the states.

Rep. Maloney is joined by Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) as the House sponsors of the ERA that would restart the amendment ratification process.

“On multiple fronts today – in the White House and in State houses across our country – women’s hard-fought rights and the progress that we’ve made over the course of a century are under attack,” **said Rep. Maloney.** “And it’s happening, in part, because our Constitution does not contain the word ‘women.’ Because it does not guarantee our equal rights. So, we need to make it clear, that equal means equal. To do that, we must spell it out in the Constitution: E-R-A. This will make a world of difference to all our children. Shouldn’t we eliminate any doubt that men and women are equal? Shouldn’t equality be the default, the inalienable truth? Now is the time. We are demanding a seat at the table and we are ready to make equality a reality.”

The House bills have overwhelming support from both sides of the aisle, in addition to celebrity endorsements from Patricia Arquette and Alyssa Milano.

"This is for all the little girls and women of America. A quest for equality that began nearly 100 years ago is about to be realized," said **Carol Jenkins**, Co-President and CEO of the ERA Coalition. "Our appreciation to the veteran activists who never gave up, and the new activists who are seeing this through. The Constitution is the document that dictates how we as Americans live. Women belong there, and now will be there."

Meanwhile, in Virginia legislators and advocates are hopeful that state will be the 38<sup>th</sup> to ratify the ERA, which simply states, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex."

"If it passes, Virginia would become a definitive part of American history," said **Gloria Steinem**, ERA Coalition board member. "It would become the state that put women in the Constitution."

"We hope Congress will immediately take action to remove the deadline," said **Jessica Neuwirth**, ERA Coalition founder and Co-President. "The Constitutional requirements for an amendment have been fulfilled, and the inclusion of women in the Constitution is long overdue."

*ABOUT THE ERA COALITION: The ERA Coalition/Fund for Equality was founded in 2014 to bring concerted, organized action to the effort to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Comprised of nearly one hundred organizations across the country, the Coalition provides education and advocacy on Constitutional Equality. The ERA Coalition’s groundbreaking research indicates that more than 94% of all Americans want an Equal Rights Amendment.*

The ERA Coalition/FFWE has offices in New York City and Washington, DC.