The ERA Debate: The ERA

History of the ERA

The following timeline is taken from the Lucy Hargrett Draper U.S. Equal Rights Amendment (1921-1982) Research Collection. More information about the ERA and the materials in this collection can be found by clicking here.

The Equal Rights Amendment

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

A Brief History of the Equal Rights Amendment in Georgia

1919  Although the 36 U.S. states necessary for ratification approved the women's suffrage (19th) amendment, Georgia became the first of ten states (nine of which were in the South), to vote against it. Georgia did not actually pass the 19th amendment until 1970.

1923  ERA was first introduced to the U.S. Congress; it took almost 50 years to get the amendment out of congress the first time.

1970  U.S. House passed ERA 352 to 15; it failed to pass the U.S. Senate.

1972  U.S. Senate passed ERA 84 to 8; thus the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment and submitted it to the 50 states for ratification.

1972  Both the Democratic and Republican party platforms endorsed the ERA.

1972  22 states of 50 had ratified the ERA out of the necessary 38.

1973  Eight more states ratified the ERA bringing the additional states needed to eight; in Georgia, the ERA was assigned to a subcommittee for further study instead of being brought to the floor for a House vote.

1973  Nebraska voted to repeal its ratification of the ERA.

1974  The Special Judiciary Committee sent ERA to the floor of the Georgia House without Recommendation; the House defeated ERA 104 to 70.

1974  Tennessee voted to repeal its ratification of the ERA.


1974  Equal Credit Opportunity Act became Public Law 93 - 495.

1974  Eighteen women were elected to the 94th Congress; the first woman governor (Connecticut) and first woman lieutenant governor were elected (N.Y.); in Georgia, Virginia Lee Shapard was elected to the all-male Senate.

1975  One additional state ratified ERA; in Georgia the Senate defeated ERA 33 to 22.

1976  Betty Friedan and Kate Millett addressed about 2000 people in support of the ERA at a rally at the Georgia state capitol.

1976  In Georgia, Liz Carpenter and Elly Peterson of ERA America addressed 400 members of the Atlanta Junior League.

1977  Mayor Maynard Jackson declared two ERA Ratification Days in the city of Atlanta, Georgia.

1977  Idaho voted to repeal its ratification of the ERA.

1978  Though he was the seventh president to support the ERA, President Jimmy Carter failed to mention ERA in his first State of the Union Address.
1978 Georgia Governor Busbee endorsed the ERA in his State of the State address, though he had not mentioned it in his 1977 address and failed to fully support it.

1978 U.S. Senate voted 54 to 44 against recognizing states' votes of recision.

1978 U.S. Congress extended ERA ratification deadline until 30 June 1982 in order to secure approval in three more states needed to add ERA to the Constitution.

1978 Indiana became the last state to ratify the ERA; Kentucky voted to repeal its ratification of the ERA.

1980 Georgia Senate defeated ERA 32 to 23.

1980 Cathey Steinberg and Eleanor Richardson, co-sponsors of the ERA in the Georgia legislature, won re-election; Dorothy Robinson became a Cobb County Superior Court Judge, the first woman to serve as a judge of a court of record in the state of Georgia.

1981 A poll cited by the League of Women Voters' National Business Council for ERA found that 73% of mid-Georgia residents favored ratification.

1981 A domestic violence bill and a bill to recognize the homemaker's contribution to the marriage were passed during the 1981 Georgia legislative session.

1982 Georgia House defeated ERA 116 to 57.

1982 The additional three states needed to pass the amendment did not ratify the ERA and, although the ERA was reintroduced to the U.S. Congress on 14 July and regularly thereafter.

To read about the current status of the ERA go to www.ERACampaign.net