

Cardin, Murkowski Lead Briefing on Removing the Deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment

JULY 25, 2019

U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) today hosted a panel of bipartisan experts outlining why Congress should remove the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA has been ratified by 37 states, leaving it one state from ratification. Cardin and Murkowski are the lead sponsors of S.J. Res. 6, a bipartisan resolution that would remove the deadline placed on the 1972 ERA and allow for its ratification once the 38th state votes to ratify. This could be Virginia, as early as January 2020.

"Most Americans are surprised to learn that the ERA is not already part of the U.S. Constitution. Ratification of the ERA would expressly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in the U.S. Constitution, and we're paying a heavy price as a society for not already establishing these protections," said Senator Cardin. "This is the 100-year anniversary of the passage of women's suffrage, and this is the year we need to finally ratify the ERA."

"Everyone should be treated equally under the law, but the U.S. Constitution does not currently guarantee women the same rights and protections as men. I'm proud that Alaska was among the early adopters, having both ratified the Equal Rights Amendment and amended the State's Constitution to prohibit discrimination in 1972. But for that to happen at a national level, we need one more state to ratify. There's absolutely no reason to put a time-limit on the ability for that to happen," said Senator Murkowski. "Congress can and should amend the language to remove the deadline for ratification to ensure gender-based equality is not only supported across the U.S. but also legally recognized. I will continue my efforts, alongside Senator Cardin and so many of my colleagues, to ensure the Equal Rights Amendment is finally added to the Constitution."

"We have the rare opportunity to bring this country one step closer to fulfilling its promise of equality for all," said Virginia House Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy. "As the state legislator sponsoring the resolution to make Virginia the final state needed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and as one of the first women to graduate from the Virginia Military Institute, it is an honor to lend my voice in support of these senators' efforts."

"Congress can and should remove the deadline on ratification," said Linda Coberly, Chair, ERA Coalition Legal Task Force, Winston & Strawn LLP. "It appears in a joint resolution of Congress, and another joint resolution would eliminate it. There should be no time limit on equality."

"While I am here with the voice of a Republican, it really is not a partisan issue," said Susan Bevan, Republican strategist and women's rights advocate. "The inclusion of the ERA in the US Constitution will benefit ALL women,

including, of course, Republican women. As a Republican, this matters to me because ... I believe the Republican Party MUST show their support for economic growth by ensuring that women have equal access to the opportunities that our country provides.”

“Equality is a fundamental human right that is enshrined in most constitutions around the world,” said Jessica Neuwirth, Founder and Co-President The ERA Coalition and Fund for Women’s Equality. “Women were intentionally left out of the Constitution when it was written. The Equal Rights Amendment is long overdue.”

“As we stand before you, on this day and in this time, we have the eyes of millions of girls and women in this country on us. They are asking if finally, and really, we have the resolve to include them as full citizens –after nearly 100 years of working for it, as if their rights and protections have to be earned – not granted freely,” said Carol Jenkins, Co-President and CEO, The ERA Coalition. “We think the time for equality has come.”

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Linda Coberly.