

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government & Veteran Affairs Committee. My name is Daniella Ramirez-Thiedeman. I am here today to urge you to VOTE NO on Concurrent Resolution 4010.

When I was in my early 20's, my friend was date raped. I had attended a house party which they were hosting along with 4 of their roommates, right here in Bismarck ND. The party started off as a small backyard get together and quickly grew, as parties do. Soon it became a number of people that consisted of both friends and strangers. One of these strangers was constantly approaching my friend and making continuous unwanted advancements. This was noticed by most of our close friends in attendance. The drinks kept pouring and my friend's alertness continued to decline, with much help from the stranger. Until my friend was nowhere in sight, and neither was the stranger.

It wasn't until the next morning when I came back to their house to help cleanup, that I saw my friend on the verge of tears and indulging in self shame, that the horrifying truth surfaced. The stranger had waited until my friend was incapacitated to take them into a room and fondle, pressure, and eventually force them into unwanted sex. If this account has made you feel disgusted and maybe even angry, it should. Now imagine how infuriated you would be if my friend was a woman and his rapist was a man.

If that were the case, maybe there would have been government funding equally allocated towards a Men's Domestic Violence and Rape Shelter to go to, in order to seek help. Maybe his friends would have urged him to seek Men's Rape Survivor Counseling instead of making fun of him for sleeping with the "Ugly Chick" or mockingly saying things like, "Dude, she was holding you like a little baby because you couldn't even sit up". Perhaps, he would have realized that he had been raped if there were equal education programs in schools to help boys identify when they had been assaulted. Perhaps when she showed up that afternoon, with gifts, in an attempt to bribe him into "forgetting about it", the police would have been waiting to question her about perpetrating "Gross Sexual Imposition".

None of those things happened and because sex discrimination clearly is not enforced nor protected, a predator got away with rape in an environment full of witnesses. There is clearly an inconsistency between women and men and it is demonstrated everywhere in society.

The ERA is not distinctly a female or male issue as demonstrated in Section 1 which states: *The Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.*

That is why it is important for our state to remain one of the great 38 states to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Let's work to ensure that there is legislation in place to support survivors like my friend and offer a nation that is truly enriched in equality.

In closing, I am going to leave you with a question that I would like you to think about during your decision making process. If the future is in fact female, shouldn't our son's rights be protected too?

Please VOTE NO on SCR 4010.

Thank you.

Daniella Ramirez-Thiedeman