

Testimony in opposition to SCR 4010
March 18, 2021

Chair Kasper and Members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:

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

Good day. I am Karen Ehrens, a resident of Bismarck and member of the League of Women Voters. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is that simple, really. The amendment is needed because the Constitution of the United States does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. I urge you to vote “no” on this resolution.

Women have made progress toward equality over the years. However, we continue to battle systematic discrimination in the forms of unequal pay, workplace harassment, and domestic violence, as examples. I look at the list of members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly, and I see only 23 percent are women. I look at the wage gap between what men earn in North Dakota and what women earn, and I see that women earn 76 cents for each dollar a man earns (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2020). We still have a ways to go.

Just yesterday, on March 17, 2021, the United States House of Representatives voted to advance the Equal Rights Amendment by removing its arbitrary ratification deadline. And, according to the National Archives, once a state has sent their certified copy of their ratification action to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and NARA has formally certified it, a state cannot rescind its ratification action. “The Archivist does not make any substantive determinations as to the validity of State ratification actions, but it has been established that the Archivist's certification of the facial legal sufficiency of ratification documents is final and conclusive.” It is likely the protestations about the year of passage in North Dakota will do anything to take away the vote.

With respect to the women and men who have worked on this amendment since 1923, and to the North Dakotans and members of the League of Women Voters who worked long and hard for the passage and ratification of this amendment, I ask you to oppose Senate Concurrent Resolution 4010. For all of your daughters and granddaughters and descendants, do not leave for them a legacy of voting against equal rights for them.

Karen Ehrens
Bismarck, ND 58501