

Equal Rights Amendment Ratified by Illinois House of Representatives

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Chicago, IL May 30, 2018 - In a landmark feat for the women's movement, the Illinois House of Representatives has voted to ratify the ERA, making Illinois the 37th state to do so. The passage of this historic amendment, which guarantees equal protection under the Constitution regardless of sex, speaks volumes to the activism and energy borne out by women's groups across the state and across the nation.

The journey of this Amendment has been a long and arduous one, dating back to its inception after the victory of the 1920's women's suffrage movement and later when it was sent to the states for ratification by Congress in 1972. Now finally, 46 years later, our state government has formally recognized that the constitutional rights of women are not only valid, but deserve protection from being abridged or denied. It is a tremendous moment of accomplishment for women and allies alike, one which Women's March Chicago is proud to have taken part in.

But this final push to move the ERA forward did not happen overnight. The massive mobilization of support in both 2017 and 2018 at women's marches has paved the way for incredible enthusiasm and collaboration of new and seasoned activists on both a state and national level. We've witnessed this in the formation of groups like Indivisible, the resurgence of encouraging and empowering women to run for office, and the emergence of movements such as #MeToo and #ILSayNoMore.

Along with the outpouring of support at statewide women's marches (hundreds of thousands strong in Chicago, Carbondale, and Springfield), Women's March Chicago has also seen tremendous internal growth with the emergence of a coalition of organizing partners called We March On Illinois. Working together, this coalition works tirelessly to amplify their collective efforts to move issues like the ERA forward. Women's March Chicago is proud to be integral to this group and to stand with other coalitions including ERA Illinois, Ratify ERA IL, and the many partner organizations behind the ERA effort.

"The women of Illinois are not engaging in unprecedented levels of activism and flooding the streets by the hundreds of thousands to say thank you for the pleasure of being treated as second class citizens," remarked WMC board member Jessica Scheller, at an ERA press conference on May 9th. "Today, we in Illinois have an opportunity to right a wrong that has existed for far too long in a way that can bring change to an entire nation. American women deserve constitutional protection from discrimination. We deserve equal rights. We deserve equal pay. And we will continue to rally and flood the streets in protest until they are ours."

While the passage of the ERA in Illinois is indeed a step forward, it is but one battle among many on the road to impartial rights. Women's March Chicago encourages its members and supporters to not lose this amazing energy and enthusiasm. It is they who have inspired so many others to take up a cause that has been long overdue, and they are the ones who will lead us to justice and equality for all under the law.

To learn more about how you can get involved, please visit www.womensmarchchicago.com.

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