

Submitted to: State Government, Elections, Pensions & Transportation Conference Committee - Minnesota Legislature

From: Suzann Willhite, President of ERA Minnesota (ERAMN) - a nonprofit organization with a mission to add an ERA into our state and federal Constitutions: Kate Quinland-Laird, ERAMN Vice President; Betty Folliard, ERAMN founder

Testimony for ERA Compliance in HF4293/SF3975 by Equal Rights Amendment Minnesota (ERAMN)

- This is a simple bill calling for the Revisor, in conjunction with the Senate council, to do a study of Minnesota laws & codes to ensure compliance with the Equal Rights Amendment\*. It then asks them to create a bill for the 2023 Session pointing out any necessary changes.

\* The Equal Rights Amendment: (ERA) - *“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”*

- Currently, 24 states have affirmed in federal court that the our US Constitution has added the Equal Rights Amendment; they are Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, along with the Governors of Kansas and Montana.
- The ERA passed both the US Senate & the US House in 1972; and today 38 states have ratified, which is all that Article V of the US Constitution requires. It has therefore completed all constitutional requirements to be added to the US Constitution.
- Our courts balance fundamental rights when they might overlap. For example, you can't yell "Fire" in a theater despite your right to free speech. Distinction 'based on sex', however, has not automatically been prohibited by law; but now with the Equal Rights Amendment as a founding principle, understanding where those distinctions currently exist (if they exist) in our statutes and codes is a necessary step for serving all the people of Minnesota.
- Other states including IL, GA, AZ and NC have similar efforts in process, with more states starting up this review.

***This ERA Compliance Bill language is Step 1 to ensure our laws and codes are aligned with the Equal Rights Amendment.***