



EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Learn how you and your organization can raise awareness of and build support for the ERA:

- ☑ Practice your elevator pitch
- ☑ Build awareness in public places
- ☑ Spread the word on social media
- ☑ Write a letter to the editor
- ☑ Pass a local resolution
- ☑ Hold postcard-writing parties
- ☑ Hold a film screening
- ☑ Meet with your representatives
- ☑ Coordinate with partners statewide

LEARN HOW INSIDE!

access resources at:

VARatifyERA.org

RAISE AWARENESS

THE CHALLENGE

While nearly all Americans – 94% – agree that the Constitution should guarantee equal rights regardless of gender, most – 80% – mistakenly believe it already does. A big challenge to ratification of the ERA is lack of public awareness about the issue.

This year, we need to connect with Virginians and our legislators and tell them that Constitutional equality is still important. **NOW is the time for Virginia to make history and become the final state to ratify the ERA.**

THE GAME PLAN

The 2019 General Assembly session doesn't start until January, but our campaign is already underway.

- **This summer:** We are training volunteers, getting local resolutions passed, holding awareness-building events and canvassing to connect with voters who will meet with their legislators this fall.

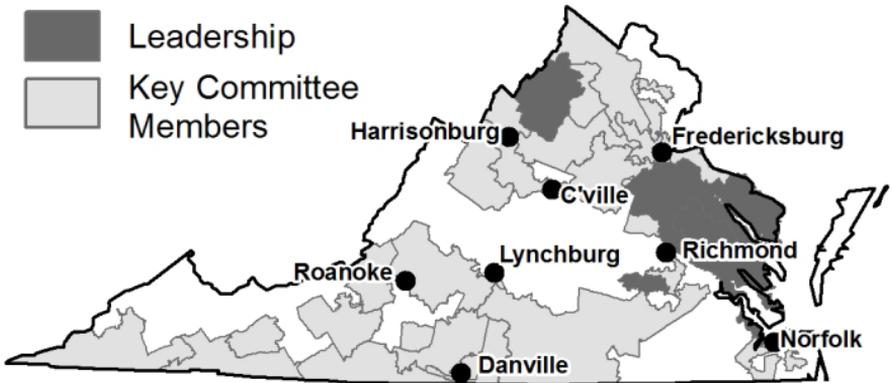
Women's Equality Day on August 26th commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted the right to vote to women. This will be an opportunity to raise ERA awareness and build support for ratification.

- **This fall:** To let legislators know that this issue matters to voters in their districts, we will schedule appointments for constituents in district offices across the Commonwealth. Election Day is an opportunity to reach a broad spectrum of voters with a presence outside voting precincts.
- **During the holidays:** Holding postcard writing parties in public locations or at home is a great way to continue to share the message with our legislators during the holidays.
- **This winter:** The General Assembly session starts in early January and lasts just 45 days. We'll meet in Richmond to speak with our representatives and coordinate awareness-building events statewide.

ABOUT THE ERA

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHERE YOU LIVE

We need to connect with a broad spectrum of voters across Virginia. We need to connect voters in every district, particularly the districts of those legislators on committees that hold the keys to moving ERA legislation to the floor of the House and Senate, where we have the votes to pass it.



Our online toolkit includes an interactive map of focus districts for constituent outreach across the Commonwealth. Tell us where you're working, so we can coordinate!

WORKING TOGETHER

As we do this work, it is important to remember that our approach should be:

- **Inclusive:** The gender equity gap is most severe for women of color. Boys and men are also impacted by the gender equity gap, whether they have employed mothers or are married to a woman who is underpaid. Ratification of the ERA will benefit EVERYONE.
- **Bipartisan:** Success requires the support of Republican leadership. We need voters across the political spectrum to get involved and contact their lawmakers.
- **Single-issue:** Keep ERA ratification front and center, separate from other issues you are working on. Do not wear or bring accessories or materials for other groups or issues when you work on the ERA.

Flip the page to learn more about things you can do to advocate for the ERA.



PREPARE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Feel confident about spreading the word — be prepared with a short pitch that will help spark curiosity, and be able to knowledgeably answer follow-up questions. You'll have lots of opportunities to tell people why ERA ratification matters and why it's important to you — make sure you're ready to make the most of them!

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes sample scripts, talking points and answers to frequently asked questions. Personal stories and anecdotes are particularly effective, whether it's your own personal story or a close friend's. In-depth ERA training with subject matter experts is also available.



BUILD AWARENESS IN PUBLIC PLACES

Public events and places provide exposure to a broad cross-section of Virginians. Most Americans support Constitutional equality, but don't know that we don't have it — they'll be glad they talked to you!

HOW TO DO IT

- **Host a table at events** like festivals and in public places like outside your library or grocery store. Election Day is an opportunity to reach a broad spectrum of voters. Use your creativity to come up with other ideas and reach out if you need assistance — we'll support you!
- **Ask to present** at other meetings, for church groups or civic organizations. If you would prefer a coordinating role, we can arrange a presenter for your event.
- **Host a happy hour** at a local brewery, or a gathering at a coffee shop. Speak for a few minutes, get people signed up, share information, and build connections with other advocates.
- **Spread the word wherever you go** — talk to your friends, neighbors, and family members. Wear your pin! Tell people you meet at the grocery store, bank, and around town. Carry information with you to share.

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes sample speaking scripts, downloadable materials and handouts, and links to additional guidance and information.



SPREAD THE WORD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others are an opportunity to share our message, connect with allies, recruit new advocates, publicize events, and persuade important stakeholders.

HOW TO DO IT

- Consider posting a picture and short description of your efforts on your Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram accounts.
- Share when you've posted by using the #hashtags #ERANow, #ERA, #ratifyERA, or #VARatifyERA in your posts.
- Connect with other groups and individuals across Virginia and the nation on social media.
- On Twitter:
 - VARatifyERA (@VARatifyERA)
 - Equal Rights Coalition (@equalrightsVA)
 - Ratifyera.org (@RatifyEraOrg)
- On Facebook:
 - ERANOWCville (www.facebook.com/groups/ERANOWCville)
 - Equal Rights Amendment: VA Next to Ratify (www.facebook.com/VARatifyERA)
 - Virginia Equal Rights Coalition (www.facebook.com/vaequalrights)
 - WoMen-Matter (www.facebook.com/womenmatteruseyourpower)

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes links to key social media accounts, guidance, and more information.



WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor can help you reach a wide audience quickly and effectively, encourage news editors to cover overlooked issues, and urge readers to support our cause.

HOW TO DO IT

- **Be timely:** coordinate letter submission with important events and news.
- **Assume nothing:** provide concise background information on the ERA and why its ratification is relevant in Virginia now.
- **Be disciplined in your messaging:** the best way to build support for ratification is to keep communication positive, bipartisan, inclusive, and single-issue. Avoid conflating this with other issues you care about. Encourage legislators to support ratification, rather than dwelling on past “no” votes.
- **Get help:** it always helps to have an extra set of eyes! Getting feedback from another ERA advocate can ensure that your message is clear and effective. Reach out and let us know if you’d like assistance!
- **Find more tips and guidance in our online toolkit.**
- **Let us know when it’s done!** We’d love to share your success with other advocates, and add to our list of letters that have been published statewide.

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes links to tips on writing letters to the editor, a list of Virginia newspapers, talking points, examples of published letters, and more.

Content adapted from Virginia Organizing’s “Speak out with Letters to the Editor” page, linked from our online toolkit.



PASS A LOCAL RESOLUTION

By adopting a resolution in support of ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, local leaders can show their support for constitutional equality and call on the Virginia Assembly to do the same. Adopting resolutions across the state can help us to show broad, bipartisan support.

WHO HAS DONE IT

- The Fairfax Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution supporting ratification of the ERA on January 23, 2018.
- Arlington's Civic Association adopted a resolution on May 1, 2018.
- Efforts are currently underway in other communities.

HOW TO DO IT

- **Get started with a template** resolution based on those adopted earlier this year. Contact us for help with customizing the resolution for your locality and advice about getting it adopted.
- **Consider working with nonpartisan organizations** such as your city council, county board of supervisors, civic organizations, and chambers of commerce to adopt a resolution.
- **Identify likely allies who are members of the organization** and ask to meet with them. Share your resolution and ask for their support of its adoption. If they're supportive, ask if they are willing to introduce the resolution, and for any advice or insights they can provide on getting it adopted.
- **Show public support** by collecting signatures and asking residents to send postcards and emails to local officials.
- **Plan a public gathering to celebrate the resolution's adoption** and invite the press to spread the word.
- **Let us know when it's done!** We'd love to share your success with other advocates, and build a comprehensive list of resolutions passed statewide.

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes links to additional guidance, examples of resolutions that have been adopted in other localities, and a resolution template to help you get started on your own.



HOLD A POSTCARD WRITING PARTY

Postcards are a quick, visual way to communicate effectively with lawmakers. A small gathering to write postcards and learn about the ERA provides an opportunity for people to get involved and reach their representatives.

HOW TO DO IT

- **Be timely:** over the summer, write postcards to your elected representatives as well as House and Senate leadership at their district office addresses. Once the bills are introduced and committees assigned this fall, you can add relevant committee members to your list and reference the bill numbers. Once the General Assembly session starts, postcards should be sent to Richmond office addresses.
- **Personalize your message:** thank representatives who have supported ERA legislation in the past for their votes. Craft persuasive messages to reach legislators who still need convincing to support Constitutional equality. Remind Republican leadership that the ERA was originally a Republican effort. Personal stories and anecdotes are particularly effective, whether it's your own personal story or a close friend's.
- **Be disciplined in your messaging:** the best way to build support for ratification is to keep communication positive, bipartisan, inclusive, and single-issue. Avoid conflating this with other issues you care about. Encourage legislators to support ERA ratification, rather than dwelling on past "no" votes.
- **Have fun:** Serve light refreshments and leave time at the beginning and end for socializing.

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes links to postcards to print, handouts, and additional guidance on holding a house party and writing postcards.



HOLD A FILM SCREENING

A private, community or theatrical showing of a film is an opportunity to build awareness, educate constituents, and connect with others as part of a fun social event.

WHO HAS DONE IT

- In January 2018, over 300 participants at the Byrd Theater in Richmond enjoyed the film *Equal Means Equal* and a panel discussion with the filmmaker, raising funds for ERA awareness-building efforts.
- In May 2018, organizations collaborated to organize a private screening of *RBG*, raising funds for a girls' mentorship program. About 180 participants learned about the ERA.

HOW TO DO IT

- **Select a film that ties into ERA ratification:**
 - *Equal Means Equal* is a documentary film about gender equality and the ERA.
 - *Legalize Equality* is a 30-minute version of the film that works well for house parties.
 - *RBG* profiles the career of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her work on gender equality.
 - *Iron Jawed Angels* tells the story of the suffragists' fight for our right to vote.
- **Carefully review the licensing requirements** for your film and type of event.
- **Co-host your event with other groups.** This is a great way to build collaborative relationships and to increase turnout with the membership of other organizations.
- **Allow time to say a few words** about ERA ratification and include a call to action. Organize a panel and include local experts, legislators and advocates.
- **Let us know about your event** so we can help spread the word!

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes downloadable handouts, postcards and other materials, links to information about how to arrange for private, community and theatrical screenings, and more!



MEET WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

Elected officials need to hear support for ERA ratification directly from their constituents. Meeting in person and sharing your story helps personalize the issue and give weight to your voice.

HOW TO DO IT

- **Bring diverse constituents:** Legislators expect ERA supporters to be middle-aged, liberal, and female. Show them that the ERA has broad support. Bringing men will show legislators that this is not just a women's issue.
- **Be disciplined in your messaging:** the best way to build support for ratification is to keep communication positive, bipartisan, inclusive and single-issue. Avoid conflating this with other issues you care about. Do not wear or bring accessories or materials for other groups or issues when you work on the ERA. Encourage legislators to support ratification, rather than dwelling on past "no" votes.
- **Share your story:** explain why this issue matters to you and how it affects you, your family and your community. Connect your story with the facts about the ERA.
- **Be timely:** Once the bills for ERA ratification have been introduced, visit your legislators in their district offices to voice your support. Coordinate with partners statewide to plan advocacy visits to the General Assembly in January and February.
- **Bring an ERA expert:** Contact us to see if an ERA subject matter expert is available to accompany you on your visit.

WHAT YOU NEED

Our online toolkit includes legislator information, tips for meeting with your representatives, ERA talking points, and more.



COORDINATE WITH PARTNERS STATEWIDE

Groups across the Commonwealth working on ratification include long-time advocates as well as new grassroots organizations. Collaborating and coordinating our efforts will help us to advocate more effectively for ERA ratification.

GROUPS WORKING ON THE ERA IN VIRGINIA INCLUDE:

- Formed in Richmond in 2013, **WoMen-Matter** is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and the International Women's Treaty (CEDAW).
- The **National Organization for Women (NOW)** is dedicated to its multi-issue and multi-strategy approach to women's rights, and is the largest organization of feminist grassroots activists in the United States. The **Charlottesville NOW ERA Task Force** is working locally in Central Virginia as well as supporting collaboration among and developing resources for partners statewide.
- The **League of Women Voters (LWV)**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.
- The **American Association of University Women (AAUW)** advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.
- A variety of groups, including some listed here, as well as grassroots, citizen lobbyists are working together under the **VARatifyERA** campaign, which features the *Virginia Fearless Girl* logo and the *Not One More GenERAtion* slogan.
- The **Virginia Equal Rights Coalition** is a nonpartisan group working to achieve ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The Coalition has helped accomplish county resolutions and media placement, and welcomes members across the Commonwealth.

HOW TO CONNECT

Our online toolkit includes contact information, website links, links to join mailing lists, and more! Let us know about you, your organization and opportunities to work together.



ONE MORE STATE
to ratify the
Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

VIRGINIA

LET'S MAKE HISTORY!

VAratifyERA.org