



## Legislation Text

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File #: 21-0145, Version: 1

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Recommendation to request City Attorney to prepare a resolution by the first week of March in support of the certification and publication by the National Archivist of the State of Virginia's ratification of the of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), in addition to support for the joint resolution introduced in Congress on January 21, 2021 to eliminate the arbitrary deadline towards full constitutional ratification.

The ERA is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to provide for the legal equality of the sexes and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. First proposed by the National Women's Party (NWP) in 1923, it took more than four decades for the ERA to be introduced to Congress under the leadership of U.S. Representative Bella Abzug of New York and community leaders Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. On October 12, 1971 the ERA was passed by the House of Representatives, and on March 22, 1972, the ERA was passed by the Senate with an overwhelming 84-8 vote. The ERA was then sent to the states for ratification, with an arbitrary deadline that the amendment be ratified by three-fourths of the states (38 of 50 states) within seven years, or by 1979.

The deadline set is not required by the constitution. It was extended once by Congress to 1982. When the extended deadline expired, the ERA fell just three states short of ratification. In a renewed push for the ERA, Nevada ratified the ERA in 2017, Illinois followed suit in 2018, and Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the ERA in January 2020.

A joint resolution has been introduced in Congress on January 21, 2021 by U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) and Congressman Tom Reed (R-N.Y.). This bipartisan legislation reads:

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That notwithstanding any time limit contained in House Joint Resolution 208, 92nd Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on March 22, 1972, the article of amendment proposed to the States in that joint resolution shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.*

The City of Long Beach has prioritized equity and inclusion in celebration of its diversity and as a commitment to ensuring all residents have equal opportunity to thrive, regardless of who you are, what your background is, what neighborhood you live in, or your personal and cultural identity. We are long overdue in ensuring gender is no longer a barrier for opportunities and success.

To this end, and in time for Women's History Month, which is celebrated annually in March, we move that the Long Beach City Council direct the City Attorney to prepare a resolution to join other cities and states in giving our full support for constitutional ratification of the ERA.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on February 10, 2021.

### **STATEMENT OF URGENCY**

Approval of this recommendation is urgent due to timeliness of recent congressional actions.

This recommendation requests that the City Attorney prepares a resolution in support of the certification and publication by the National Archivist of the State of Virginia's ratification of the of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), in addition to support for the joint resolution introduced in Congress on January 21, 2021 to eliminate the arbitrary deadline towards full constitutional ratification. The requested action is anticipated to have a minimal impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have minimal impact on existing City Council priorities.

Approve recommendation.

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COUNCILWOMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT

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