



September 30, 2022

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate  
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey,

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts encourages you to urge Senate Majority Leader Schumer to schedule a vote on S.J. Res. 1. This resolution will eliminate the timeline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). It passed with bipartisan support in the House, and Senators Murkowski and Cardin lead the resolution in the Senate. We thank you for your leadership heretofore on this vital issue and your appreciation for the opportunity that this moment presents.

Women gained the right to vote over 100 years ago, and it is past time to protect equality for women in the US Constitution. Despite the significant legal and legislative advances that have been made in recent decades, women continue to face discrimination on the basis of sex. The symptoms of this systemic discrimination are apparent in the ongoing fights against unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, and limited access to comprehensive health care. It is not enough to treat the symptoms; we must address the root cause of inequality. The ongoing reality of sex discrimination and the longstanding necessity for constitutional protection is unequivocally apparent in the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which erodes a fundamental right that women and people who may become pregnant have held for nearly 50 years. We have already seen nationwide the devastating consequences of this decision, which underscores the vital need for constitutional protections against the denial of equal rights.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, comprised of 46 local chapters and 3,000 members, worked to pass the Beyond ROE agenda, guaranteeing reproductive rights to all. While Massachusetts is a beacon to other states on reproductive justice, we have mountains to climb to ensure equity. According to Boston Indicators, Massachusetts women earn \$.81 for every dollar a man earns. Black women earn even less at \$.57 and Latinas earn \$.51. As members of the Wage Equity Now coalition, we are working to ensure racial and gender wage equity in the Commonwealth by 2030. The Common Start state legislation aims to fund universal PreK—a plan which will increase lifetime earnings for women struggling under the weight of exorbitant childcare costs.

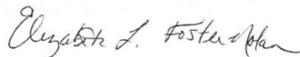
The ERA has satisfied all ratification requirements in Article V of the Constitution and should be added as the 28th Amendment. In 1972, Congress passed the ERA with well over the necessary two-thirds vote and sent it to the states. It has been over two years since Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the amendment, fulfilling the three-fourth state ratification requirement. The best way to ensure that the will and ratification rights of the states are respected is by removing all barriers blocking the ERA from being published in the Constitution.

Congress has regular authority to remove the time limit on the ratification of the ERA. The idea of time limits on

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constitutional amendments is a modern congressional addition to the amendment ratification process. Before the twentieth century, there was no discussion of imposing a time constraint on the state's consideration of a proposed amendment. Further, the timeline for ratification contained in the ERA does not appear in the amendment itself but its resolving clause. As such, Congress is now responsible for passing a joint resolution to eliminate the arbitrary time limit and declare the Amendment ratified. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports equal rights for all regardless of sex and, as an organization that defends democracy, believes there cannot be a time limit on establishing equality. Article 106 of the Commonwealth's constitution, adopted in November 1976 states, "Equality under the law shall not be denied or abridged because of sex, race, color, creed or national origin." The passage of S.J. Res. 1 will remove the ratification timeline and enable the publication of the ERA, a vital step to ensure genuine equality under the law for every person in the nation. The time is now.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Foster-Nolan  
President, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts



Patricia E. Comfort  
Executive Director, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts