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Baldwin Seeks to Speed Ratification of Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) chose today, International Women's Day, to introduce legislation to speed ratification of the **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** to the Constitution.

"The ERA is intended to ensure equality for women and men in all areas of society," said Baldwin. "It is an immediate and decisive remedy to end sex discrimination in federal and state laws and provides a clear benchmark for judicial interpretation. Achieving equality and justice for all in the United States is fundamental to our democratic principles, economic recovery, and continued leadership around the world. The intent of my resolution is simple: a path to equality for all Americans," Baldwin said.

When Congress passed the ERA in 1972, it provided that the measure be ratified by the necessary number of states (38) within 7 years. This deadline was later extended to 10 years, and, by 1982, 35 states had ratified the ERA. That left the ERA just three states shy of full ratification when the deadline passed in 1982.

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia recently stated his belief that the Constitution does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. Baldwin's legislation removes the deadline for ratification and clarifies that upon ratification by three additional states, the Equal Rights Amendment will be added to the United States Constitution.

The Madison Amendment, ratified in 1992, 203 years after its initial submission, suggests that the ERA remains legally viable and properly before the remaining states for ratification. Furthermore, the 1978 ERA deadline extension demonstrates that Congress can amend previously established deadlines.

"With women comprising more than 50% of the workforce and serving this country on the fronts of two wars, it is time to end the discrimination based on sex that women still face in the United States," said Jean Landweber, Wisconsin ERA Chair, United 4Equality. "I am proud of my Representative, Tammy Baldwin, for introducing this legislation to remove the arbitrary time limit that was imposed in 1972 for ratification of the ERA. The time is right to achieve equality of rights by finishing what the brave women of the '70s started," Landweber said.

Baldwin's bill is endorsed by United 4 Equality, LLC; National Council of Women's Organizations; National Organization for Women; American Association of University Women; Women's Research and Education Institute (WRED); National Women's Political Caucus; Equal Rights Alliance, Inc.; ERA Education Fund, Inc.; Federally Employed Women (FEW); National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund; Katrina's Dream; Clearinghouse on Women's Issues; JWPOLICY Associates; Progressive Democrats of America (PDA); One Struggle One Fight; Louisiana Coalition for the Equal Rights Amendment; Louisiana Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW/LA); American Association of University Women of Louisiana (AAUW Louisiana); Louisiana League of Women Voters (LLWV); The Louisiana Movement; Louisiana NOW; Planned Parenthood of Louisiana & Mississippi Delta; The Louisiana Network; Equal Rights Amendment North Carolina Citizens Task Force; Montgomery County chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW); Pacific Shore NOW; ERA Once and For All

States whose legislatures have not yet ratified the ERA are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia.