



March 2020 CWI Newsletter <https://womensclearinghouse.org>

Postponement of Tuesday, March 24, 2020 CWI Meeting, Noon-1:30 PM to April 28, 2020 noon if Covid 19 threat is sufficiently mitigated by then.

Place: The Alliance for Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 5th Floor; entrance on New Hampshire Ave., NW (Nearest Metro Stop: Dupont Circle, north or south exit)

RSVP is now required. Go to <https://womensclearinghouse.org/rsvp>

Getting ERA in the U.S. Constitution

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. First introduced by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman in 1923, it seeks to end the legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, employment, and other issues. The recent passage of the ERA in Virginia made it the 38th state to ratify and achieved the threshold of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the American states required to add an amendment to the Constitution. While our hearts were buoyed by this long awaited step, the battle may not be over yet.

We have invited three activists to talk about the background, support, and final steps to enshrine the ERA in the US constitution:

Bettina Hager, the DC Director of the ERA Coalition and Fund for Women's Equality, has extensive background in preparing advocacy materials and training lobbyists on the issues of constitutional equality. Bettina will provide the background of the ERA and the ERA Coalition's work that has moved it forward to be placed in the Constitution in the United States. She will explain the three-state ratification strategy legislation sponsored by Sen. Cardin in April, 2014 and how it has gotten us to this point.

We are hopeful that a Delta Sigma Theta Sorority representative will speak about their critical support role in the ERA passage in Virginia. The Deltas- noted for their bright red suits and community engagement works – are an organization of college educated women committed to the constructive development of its members and to public service with a primary focus on the Black community. An integral part in the passage of the 19th amendment which gave all women the right to vote, they have thrown their influence and energy in characteristic fashion to support the Equal Rights Amendment, particularly in VA.

Ellie Smeal, current president of Feminist Majority and past president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), has fought on the frontlines for women's equality for more than three decades. In the 1970s, as president of the NOW, she spearheaded the drive to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the largest nationwide grassroots and lobbying campaign in the history of the modern women's movement. Smeal also pioneered the use of the Internet as a feminist organizing and research tool by launching the Feminist Majority Foundation Online in 1995. Always the organizer and practical realist, she will speak about the steps that need to be covered to get the ERA finally placed in the US Constitution in the United States.

CWI meetings are free and open to the public. Bring your own lunch. An RSVP to attend is required. RSVP to womensclearinghouse.org/rsvp. Next possible CWI meeting. Noon Tue. May 26, 2020