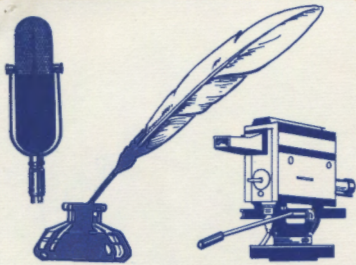


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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 12 NOON MONDAY--
August 10, 1970

Remarks by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., on the resolution proposing a Women's Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. Speaker: Men are not generally speaking anti-women; it simply appears to work out that way.

I, for one, do not plead guilty to the charge. In my own defense, I would note that I am very happy to confer all rights -- and responsibilities -- on my wife. In addition, I would point out that I had something to do with the fact that 15 of the last 16 House members to sign the petition discharging the House Judiciary Committee from jurisdiction over H. J. Res. 264, the Women's Equal Rights Amendment, were Republicans.

In all seriousness, I am delighted to have had a hand in bringing to the House floor the proposed Women's Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The purpose of the amendment is most laudable: To provide constitutional protection against laws and official practices that treat men and women differently.

The proposed amendment would provide that: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

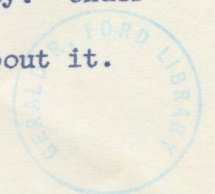
This amendment would insure equal rights under the law for men and women and would secure the right of all persons to equal treatment under the laws and official practices without differentiation based on sex.

Adoption of the amendment would, of course, require a two-thirds vote of both Houses of Congress and ratification by three-fourths of the States. I hope the Congress will recognize the justice of this amendment and the clear and present need for it. I call upon this House to render its two-thirds approval.

We like to believe that we live in an enlightened age. How can any age and any nation be termed enlightened if it continues discrimination against women? And we do, of course, still have discrimination against women simply because they are women.

This amendment has been pending before the House Judiciary Committee for 47 years -- since 1923. You would almost think there had been a conspiracy. Under the circumstances it is almost silly to say it is time we did something about it. It is long past time.

(more)



The great French writer Victor Hugo said: "Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come."

There is no question that the Women's Equal Rights Amendment is just such an idea. Its time has come just as surely as did the 19th Amendment to the Constitution 50 years ago, giving women the right to vote.

I think it is fitting that today, when the Women's Equal Rights Movement may well be crowned with success, the initiative to implement full equal rights for women comes in the House. After all, the House has remained quiescent or adamant on this score -- take your choice -- for 47 years while the Senate has twice passed a Women's Equal Rights Amendment, in 1950 and 1953. And we are passing the amendment free and clear of anything like the Senate's Hayden rider, which threw in a qualifier unacceptable to women.

It is also most fitting that the House should be the first to act today because the prime mover of this amendment in the Congress is my dear colleague from Michigan, Rep. Martha Griffiths. Passage of this amendment would be a monument to Martha.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment should really be unnecessary. But it clearly is mandatory because women today do not have equal rights. This amendment will give them those most valued of rights -- the rights to a job, to a promotion, to a pension, to equal social security benefits, to all the fringe benefits of any job. There is no denying that these rights are different for women than for men.

It is, of course, easy to jest about this matter. For instance, I am sure our G.I.'s will not complain if women are drafted into the Armed Forces in the same numbers as men. And I'm sure there are men who will welcome the awarding of alimony to husbands in divorce actions.

In any case, I know that men will still look upon women as the fairer sex and will want to continue opening doors for them. This is not inequality, just "woomanship."

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Griffiths and others have made an excellent case for adoption of the Women's Equal Rights Amendment. I urge overwhelming House approval of H. J. Res. 264.

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NOTE TO FIFTH DISTRICT NEWS MEDIA

On Monday, August 10, the House of Representatives will consider House Joint Resolution 264, the Women's Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and is expected to approve it by more than the two-thirds majority required. The resolution had been locked up in the House Judiciary Committee and reaches the House floor only by virtue of the fact that 218 House members, a majority, signed what is known as a "discharge petition." A discharge petition, if it receives enough signatures, takes a bill away from a committee which is sitting on it. This particular discharge petition was introduced by Rep. Martha Griffiths, D-Mich. Lacking enough signatures, she appealed to Ford. Since Ford is Republican leader of the House, he used his "powers of persuasion" and the net result was that 15 of the last 16 signatures needed to bring the number of petition signers to 218 came from Republicans. That is the background for the five-minute speech Ford is scheduled to make on the House floor Monday. A copy of that speech is attached.

