



## **GENERAL FEDERATION of WOMEN'S CLUBS**

**GFWC Legislation and Public Policy Quarterly Newsletter 2020-2022  
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### **THE ERA –“GFWC’S IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PROCESS”**

What we support in our role as a GFWC member!

GFWC adopts public policy resolutions in convention and those set the priorities of the organization. Each year, the GFWC Resolutions Committee recommends proposed language to the GFWC Executive Committee, which then recommends proposed resolutions to the member clubs and state federations through the Call to Convention. During the Annual Meeting, the voting delegates vote on the resolutions which set the public policy priorities of the organization. GFWC originally adopted a resolution in support of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1944, and it has been reaffirmed in 1950, 1967, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019.

GFWC works with other women’s organizations to make a larger impact!!

The ERA Coalition has become the national umbrella organization to coordinate partner organizations and host bi-weekly calls with local, state, and national advocates of the ERA to strengthen grassroots efforts and communicate with a strong, multigenerational voice. GFWC has long been active with the ERA Coalition and our International President and HQ staff attend such events. Activities have included legal briefs, research, campus engagement, media training, and many other efforts to keep the ERA in the forefront.

GFWC members may work locally at the state level.

Based on the GFWC resolution in support of the ERA, state federations have played an active role in supporting state legislative efforts to ratify the amendment. Such an effort allows GFWC to participate in a statewide network of women’s organizations. In 2018, advocates initiated the last big push to get the final three states needed for ratification. Illinois, Nevada, and Virginia joined the others and in January 2020, there were the necessary

three-fourths of states to ratify the ERA. States are still considering the ERA and also working to change their own constitutions to ensure women's equality under the law.

GFWC members are encouraged to contact their Members of Congress to support GFWC 's position backed by our resolutions!

The ERA Coalition has led the effort to educate congressional staff and Members of Congress and work with the Congressional Women's Caucus to support the effort to ratify the amendment. In January 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia became the necessary 38th state to ratify, but the United States Archivist refused to publish and certify the amendment based on a Department of Justice memorandum stating that the deadline had passed. Most recently, bipartisan leaders of Congress have introduced House Joint Resolution 17 and Senate Joint Resolution 1 to remove the deadline and enable the ERA to become part of the United States Constitution.

Together GFWC, with many other organizations, can and will make a difference!

GFWC International President Marian St. Clair joined the ERA Coalition to write to President Biden and encourage support for the ERA either by urging the U.S. Archivist to publish and certify the ERA, or urging Congress to pass legislation to remove the deadline and thus ensure ratification. Some GFWC state federations also have co-signed the letter and joined the more than 150 organizations communicating to the White House. GFWC Legislative Action Center has been activated to urge Members of Congress to co-sponsor and vote for the bipartisan House and Senate Joint Resolutions. It has taken a coordinated, comprehensive effort and years of advocacy, but we are much closer to realizing the dream of equality for women.

Two closing thoughts:

**When representing GFWC, always take the position of our GFWC resolutions! Not your personal opinion.**

"There should be no time limit on equality. Even as we celebrate America's first female Vice President, our nation is held back as the only modern constitution that fails to enshrine full equality for both men and women. This is unacceptable," said U. S. Senator Ben Cardin from Maryland and a sponsor of the Senate Joint Resolution.