



Santa Cruz County Women's Commission

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January 30, 2020
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Support for the Ratification of the *Equal Rights Amendment*

Dear Members of the Board:

The purpose of this letter is to request your formal support for the *Equal Rights Amendment* and subsequent communication of that support to our legislative delegation.

The Santa Cruz County Women's Commission is proud to represent Santa Cruz County women and we are passionate about equality for all. As 2020 marks the 100-year anniversary of the 19th Amendment to eliminate voting discrimination based on sex, we hope it will also be the year that the *Equal Rights Amendment* is finally incorporated into the U.S. Constitution, thereby protecting equality for everyone under the law.

In 1972, the *Equal Rights Amendment* was passed in both the Senate and the House. In order to become part of the Constitution, the amendment would have had to be ratified by three-fourths of the states by March 22, 1979. The ratification deadline was extended to June 20, 1982, at which time only 35 of the 38 states needed had ratified the amendment. To date, the *Equal Rights Amendment* has not yet become a part of the U.S. Constitution.

Since that time, both Nevada and Illinois have ratified the amendment and most recently, incoming Democratic leaders made Virginia the 38th state to ratify the amendment this month. The amendment will become part of the Constitution provided that Congress and, potentially, the Supreme Court, determine that the 1982 ratification deadline is not valid.

The *Equal Rights Amendment* has been called the "Women's Equality Amendment," to emphasize the fact that women have historically been guaranteed fewer rights than men and indicate that equality cannot be achieved until women's constitutionally protected rights are raised to the same level as those of men. As a voice for women in our community, the Women's Commission has a vested interest in the *Equal Rights Amendment* becoming law.

In 1995, your Board voted unanimously to support the ratification of the *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) treaty. Today, we request your formal support for any legislation extending the ratification deadline and incorporating the *Equal Rights Amendment* into the Constitution. We further request that you communicate that support to Virginia's Democratic leaders and to our legislative delegation.

On behalf of the *Santa Cruz County Women's Commission*, we thank you for your continued support for advancing the rights of women in our community.

Respectfully,

Jillian Ritter, *Commission Co-Chair*

Theresa M. Cariño, *Commission Co-Chair*