

January 20, 2023

Via email

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
172 State Street
The Capitol, Room 330
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building 932
Albany, NY 12248

cc: Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright

**RE: SUPPORT FOR THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT'S SECOND PASSAGE
EARLY LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Dear Governor Hochul, Senate Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie:

We are organizations that advocate for and/or provide direct services to people who are not currently protected from discrimination in the New York State Constitution. Many of us are directly impacted by this gap in protection.

As you know, our Constitution's Equal Protection Clause only offers protections from discrimination based on race and religion, leaving New Yorkers without constitutional protections for ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex — including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, and pregnancy outcomes. The New York State Constitution is a foundational document that outlines our fundamental rights, and it must be updated to reflect and protect all of us.

We would like to thank the legislature for taking the first step to amend the State Constitution by passing the Equal Right Amendment (ERA) shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, eliminating the federal constitutional right to abortion and paving the way to unravel other fundamental protections. We urge you to pass the ERA for a second time in order to send it to the ballot for the 2024 election. And there is no better time than during the first month of the 2023 legislative session – as January 22, 2023 would have been the 50th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* – and this bill is a fitting tribute by enshrining abortion rights in New York’s constitution.

Importantly, the passage of this amendment is not just a win for gender justice and reproductive rights. It is a victory for LGBTQ, immigrant, and disability rights and for everyone who truly believes in equality.

The ERA would prohibit discrimination by the government based on a person’s ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex — including their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, and pregnancy outcomes. It would also protect against any government actions that would curtail a person’s reproductive autonomy or their access to reproductive health care.

It would make New York a national leader when it comes to anti-discrimination protections.

Our federal and state constitutions were written at a time when their promises of equality only protected the interests of a few. With the U.S. Supreme Court poised to eviscerate some of our most fundamental rights, our state must take matters into our own hands and ensure protection for all. And with second passage of the ERA, our state constitution could be a gold standard for true, intersectional equality.

We urge you to do everything in your power to pass this amendment early in the 2023 legislative session, so that voters have the opportunity to adopt it during the 2024 election.

Sincerely,

1. 504 Democratic Club
2. Abortion Access Front
3. Albany County Young Democrats
4. Albany Damien Center
5. American Association of University Women - Rockland County
6. Bedford-Pound Ridge Women's Collective
7. Bend the Arc
8. Bend the Arc - Long Island

9. BKForge: Brooklyn for Reproductive and Gender Equity
10. Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law
11. CCoHope Indivisible
12. Center for Elder Law & Justice
13. Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
14. Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)
15. Defending Democracy
16. Democratic Committee of Schroepfel/Phoenix
17. Empire Justice Center
18. Equality New York
19. EXDOUS
20. GOBk By Day
21. Grass Roots Action New York
22. Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley
23. Indivisible Scarsdale
24. LatinoJustice PRLDEF
25. League of Women Voters East Nassau
26. League of Women Voters of Broome and Tioga Counties
27. League of Women Voters of Huntington
28. League of Women Voters of New Castle
29. League of Women Voters of New York City
30. League of Women Voters of New York State
31. League of Women Voters of Port Washington-Manhasset
32. League of Women Voters of Saratoga County
33. League of Women Voters of Scarsdale
34. League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County, New York
35. League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns
36. League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metropolitan Area
37. League of Women Voters Tompkins County
38. Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund

39. Long Island Inclusive Communities Against Hate (LIICAH)
40. LWV of Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties
41. LWV of New Rochelle
42. LWV of the Mid Hudson Region
43. LWV of the North Country
44. LWV of Westchester County
45. LWV Utica/Rome Metro Area
46. LWVNYC
47. Metro New York Health Care for All
48. NAMI Huntington
49. Nassau Progressives
50. National Council of Jewish Women New York
51. National Institute for Reproductive Health Action Fund
52. National Organization for Women, Suffolk Chapter
53. NEW Pride Agenda
54. New York Association on Independent Living
55. New York City Bar Association
56. New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)
57. New York Progressive Action Network
58. New York Unitarian Universalist Justice
59. Northwest Bronx Indivisible
60. NYC Action Lab
61. NYCD16 Indivisible
62. NY Progressive Action Network
63. NYPAN Greene
64. OLA of Eastern Long Island
65. Ontario County Justice Coalition
66. Physicians for a National Health Program - NY Metro Chapter
67. Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts
68. Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic
69. Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic Action Fund
70. PowHer New York

71. Project Guardianship
72. Public Issues Committee of the LI Council of Churches
73. Social Justice Committee of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock
74. Suffolk Progressives
75. Syracuse LWV
76. Uptown Progressive Action, a NYPAN chapter
77. Ulster Activists
78. WCLA - Choice Matters, Inc.
79. WESPAC Foundation
80. Westchester for Change
81. Westchester Women's Agenda
82. Western New York Law Center, Inc.
83. Women to the Front
84. Women's Diversity Network
85. Zonta Brooklyn