

Engaging College Students In Their Communities

MARCH 2024

Today's Agenda:

NYS ERA Ballot Proposal: On The Ballot In Nov. 2024

- Why is it on the ballot?
- What does it do?
- Why is it so important?
- How did it get on the ballot?
- How do I find legislative action?
- What can I do to help get it passed?

US ERA Constitutional Amendment

How to Get Involved in Your Own Community

On The Ballot In November 2024: NYS ERA Ballot Proposal



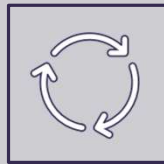
- A. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of this state or any subdivision thereof. No person shall, because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed [or], religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy, be subjected to any discrimination in [his or her] their civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation, or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision of the state, pursuant to law.

- B. Nothing in this section shall invalidate or prevent the adoption of any law, regulation, program, or practice that is designed to prevent or dismantle discrimination on the basis of a characteristic listed in this section, nor shall any characteristic listed in this section be interpreted to interfere with, limit, or deny the civil rights of any person based upon any other characteristic identified in this section.

Why Is It On The Ballot?



Our state constitution does not protect all of us.



Our New York State Constitution is wholly inadequate when it comes to ensuring equality.



We need a constitution with broad protections for every New Yorker. The current New York State Constitution fails to prohibit discrimination against groups who have been historically targeted, including those with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, immigrants, women, and pregnant people.

What Does It Do?

Adding an Equal Rights Amendment to our state constitution would:

- ▶ **Broadly prohibits discrimination for specific populations and enshrines abortion rights in the constitution.**
- ▶ **Explicitly includes language to clarify what sex discrimination is**
- ▶ **Ensure comprehensive and inclusive equal protections, including threats to the legal equality of LGBTQI+ people.**

Why Is It So Important?

- ▶ Repeal of Roe - if rights are not explicitly written down, they can be taken away
- ▶ New York can lead the nation in providing critical protections to vulnerable people
- ▶ Laws fight discrimination, but need backing of the NYS constitution; without amendment, opens door for future legislatures or administrations to pass laws that target New Yorkers based on their identity.
- ▶ Provides guardrails to hold our state government accountable
- ▶ Adds to existing protections for race and religion in constitution
- ▶ Explicitly prohibits discrimination of many more populations

How did it get on the ballot?

The NYS Constitution may be amended in two ways:

▶ **Legislative Process**

- ▶ Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by the Legislature at any time.
- ▶ Amendments proposed by Legislature must be adopted and then must be adopted again following a general election of members for the Legislature; voters must then approve the amendment at a general election.

▶ **Constitutional Convention Process**

- ▶ Every 20 years, voters may approve convening a convention to propose changes to the Constitution.
- ▶ Voters must approve or reject holding a convention every 20 years.
- ▶ If approved, delegates are chosen in the next year's general election; any changes adopted at convention must receive voter approval in the next year's general election.

How Did It Get On The Ballot? Legislative Process

July 1, 2022 (all happened on the same day)

- ▶ S 51002 Introduced by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader in NYS Senate
- ▶ Referred to Rules Committee
- ▶ Passed Full Senate
- ▶ Delivered to Assembly
- ▶ Referred to Judiciary Committee
- ▶ Substituted for A41002
- ▶ Passed Assembly (with Message of Necessity)
- ▶ Returned to Senate
- ▶ No Governor signature required

NYS Senate – January 2023

- ▶ S108 Introduced by Senator Liz Krueger (13 co-sponsors)
- ▶ Referred to NYS AG for opinion
- ▶ Referred to Judiciary Committee and amended (S108A)
- ▶ Referred to Rules Committee
- ▶ Third Reading
- ▶ Substituted by A1283
- ▶ Third Reading
- ▶ Passed Senate Jan. 24, 2023
- ▶ 43 Ayes/20 Nays
- ▶ Returned to Assembly

NYS Assembly- January 2023

- ▶ A1283 Introduced by Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright (33 co-sponsors)
- ▶ Referred to Judiciary Committee
- ▶ Referred to NYS AG for opinion
- ▶ Third Reading
- ▶ Passed Assembly Jan. 24, 2023
- ▶ 97 Ayes/46 Nays
- ▶ Delivered to Senate

How Do I Find Legislative Action?

- ▶ Find your elected officials at: <https://www.lwv.org/take-action/find-your-elected-officials>
- ▶ NYS Senate website: <https://www.nysenate.gov/>
 - ▶ Find bios, committee assignments, and recent news about each Senator
- ▶ NYS Assembly website: <https://nyassembly.gov/>
 - ▶ Find bios, committee assignments, and recent news about each Assemblymember
- ▶ Both websites have a Bill Search section
 - ▶ Find who introduced the bill and any co-sponsors
 - ▶ Find action of bill, eg, what committee it was referred to
 - ▶ Find the exact text of the bill
 - ▶ Find Committee votes and full floor vote

What Can I Do To Help Get The NYS ERA Passed?

Tell your friends about the ballot proposal

Help register voters

Organize neighborhood or events at your college educating people on the ballot proposal

Talk with clubs on campus who might help educate voters on the proposal

Remind people to vote just before election day

Remind people of the 4 ways to vote

Join groups advocating for the ballot proposal

Share social media posts from organizations on your personal social media accounts on ballot proposal

Join door knocking by organizations supporting the proposal

Join organizations working on passage, eg, League of Women Voters

Encourage use of www.vote411.org for information on their ballot

Other ideas?

US ERA (Constitutional Amendment)



Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission by the Congress:

"ARTICLE —

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

"Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

"Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

Differences And Similarities Between US ERA And NYS ERA



US ERA

- US ERA is a US constitutional amendment proposal
- US ERA prohibits discrimination based on sex
- Must be ratified (approved by each state Legislature) by 38 states

NYS ERA

- NYS ERA is a NYS constitutional amendment proposal
- NYS ERA prohibits discrimination race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed [or], religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy
- Must be adopted by voters
- Codifies existing laws in statutes

How To Get Involved In Issues Your Community

- ▶ Where do you live? Village, town, city, county?
 - ▶ Find your local elected officials at: <https://www.lwv.org/take-action/find-your-elected-officials>
 - ▶ Find when your local government meets (any level)
 - ▶ Attend a local meeting
 - ▶ Speak during public comment period
- ▶ Get involved in your college community
 - ▶ What is the student government?
 - ▶ How are representatives elected?
 - ▶ When does the student government meet?
 - ▶ What are the hot topics?
 - ▶ Attend meetings and speak to issues
 - ▶ Explore clubs that represent your interests and join their efforts

How To Get Involved In Issues Your Community

- ▶ Read news articles and follow local social media outlets
- ▶ Join community organizations or clubs on campus working on issues of interest
- ▶ Create an educational program at your college on an issue
- ▶ Register voters and educate them on candidates and issues
- ▶ Follow your local government meetings; attend and observe meetings
- ▶ Write articles for your college media on issues of interest
- ▶ Submit letters to the editor of news outlets locally
- ▶ Call elected officials, local, state and national and voice your opinion
- ▶ Follow state and national government meetings
- ▶ VOTE – encourage use of www.vote411.org
- ▶ Your ideas?