

**National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women)**

**Equal Rights Amendment Resolution**

**Committee: Women's Issues Resolution: WMN-21-02**

1. **WHEREAS** the advancement of gender equality is fundamental to the democracy of the
2. United States;
3. **WHEREAS** the Declaration of Independence states “We hold these truths to be
4. self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with
5. certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life Liberty and the pursuit of
6. Happiness”;
7. **WHEREAS** the ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1922, one year after the 19th
8. Amendment, which gave women the right to vote was enacted and it has been introduced
9. in every session of Congress since then;
10. **WHEREAS** simply put, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) amends the U.S.
11. Constitution to prohibit discrimination on account of sex;
12. **WHEREAS** the first Black woman elected to Congress, Shirley Chisholm speaking in
13. support of the ERA in August 1971 declared, “It [Equal Rights Amendment] provides a
14. legal basis for attack on the most subtle, most pervasive, and most institutionalized form
15. of prejudice that exists”;
16. **WHEREAS** Pauli Murray stated, “As a constitutional lawyer, a woman and a [Black
17. person], I can say with conviction that [Black] women as a group have the most to gain
18. from the adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment. All that has been said about the
19. frustrations and deprivations of American women generally because of discrimination by
20. reason of sex can be said with special force about the position of Black women”;
21. **WHEREAS** Congress passed the ERA in 1972 with major bipartisan support in the
22. House and Senate, provides that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or
23. abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex”, thereby ensuring the
24. same constitutional protections for both men and women;
25. **WHEREA**S women’s groups, including strong support among Black women’s
26. organizations, along with unions and other allies led solid a national campaign to have
27. three fourth of states ratify the Amendment by the arbitrary 1982 deadline, falling short
28. of putting women and men in the Constitution by a mere three states;
29. **WHEREAS** today, the ERA is enjoying renewed interest at a moment when several
30. progressive Black women-led movements, like Black Lives Matter, The Women’s March,
31. #Me Too; and #Times Up, are drawing widespread support and defining equality and
32. social justice for groups that are marginalized;
33. **WHEREAS** in 2017 Nevada became the first state in roughly 35 years to ratify the ERA
34. when the Legislature’s upper Chamber narrowly approved the Joint Resolution under the
35. watchful eye of its chief sponsor, Senator Pat Spearman who represents one of the state’s
36. most diverse communities;
37. **WHEREAS** Illinois ratified the ERA in 2018, followed by Virginia in 2020, thus
38. meeting the requirement for 38 states or three fourth of all states;
39. **WHEREAS** the U.S. House of Representatives passed a Joint Resolution on two separate
40. occasions to remove the deadline set by Congress in 1977, with the most recent being
41. March 2021 and the companion bill S.J. Resolution 1 is currently before the U.S. Senate;
42. **WHEREAS** recent polling show that the ERA enjoys strong support by the public --
43. with as much as 80 to 90 percent of women and men supporting it;
44. **WHEREAS** Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman, one of the conveners of the
45. Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls, was inspired to organize monthly
46. Special Order sessions on the floor of Congress to gather support for the ERA;
47. **WHEREAS** the ERA would protect Black women against the enormous wage gap they
48. experience when compared to non-Hispanic white men, make them safer from sexual and
49. domestic violence, and create opportunity for parity in corporate leadership and elected
50. positions, and adds protection against pregnancy discrimination in the workplace;
51. **WHEREAS** some point to existing civil rights laws such as the Title IX of the Education
52. Amendments of 1972 (prohibits sex discrimination in education), Title VII of the Civil
53. Right Amendments 1964 (prohibits race discrimination in education and employment),
54. and the Violence Against Women’s Act (VAWA) as existing protection for Black women
55. and girls from discrimination and bias -- both subtle and overt, the ERA provides added
56. safeguards;
57. **WHEREAS** the Constitution is the foundation from where all else flows that defines
58. fairness and “liberty and justice for all”. Black women -- and women in all our diversity
59. -- belong in the Constitution.
60. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that NOBEL Women affirms its support and
61. advocacy for the ratification, certification and implementation of the ERA.
62. **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of the resolution be
63. transmitted to the President of the United States, Vice President of the United States,
64. Members of the U.S. Congress and other federal and state officials as appropriate.

**Introduced by The Honorable Tonya Anderson**

**Georgia General Assembly**