

To all Fathers who have Daughters:

As your daughters honor you on Father's Day, remember how much you care about them and fought or still fight to keep them safe. But have you asked why are they not safe? Inequality makes them not safe. One in four women and one in ten men experience sexual or physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. One in five women and one in 71 men has been raped in their lifetimes, half the time by someone they knew. (National Center on Domestic Violence) Only one in three sexual assaults is reported compared to more than 60% of other assaults and robberies. The reason most given for not reporting? Fear. (RAINN)

Even if you succeed in seeing your daughters through high school and college and maybe post-graduate school, she still won't be paid as much as a man with the same education and experience. Nationally, we have a pay gap of 18% less for women and that gets worse for women of color. The gap has not decreased much since 1980.

In May 2021, the State House of Representatives debated the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in AZ, one of only 12 states that has not ratified. One after another opponents stood up and said they knew a successful woman so that means the ERA is not needed. I recall an intelligence test from my middle school years that asked us to explain, "One swallow does not a summer make." Apparently, these legislators believe that because some woman they knew or had met or heard about was successful, all the facts about the wage gap, health inequalities, violence toward women were not important. Representatives are elected to "represent" their constituents not themselves. Fifty-one percent of their constituents are female. They are elected to promote the public good, not just their own cause. That's called selfish where I come from.

So what can you as a father do to flip these odds in favor of your daughter? You can pass the ERA that says:

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

In spite of facts, some legislators claim women don't need to be in the constitution. Constitutional equality will ensure that laws like the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) cannot expire as it did or that the Supreme Court will not say that sex discrimination does not include pregnancy discrimination. The Supreme Court members missed a class or two in biology and failed to understand the connection between woman/pregnancy so that we had to pass a separate law saying pregnancy discrimination is illegal too.

A provision was put into the VAWA when it was first passed saying that if local authorities refused to prosecute rape cases, the woman could go to the federal courts and bring a civil rights claim. The Supreme Court threw it out saying that there was no hook in the Constitution for Congress to be making laws protecting women. *U.S. v. Morrison*, 529 U.S. 598, 120 S. Ct. 1740, 146 L. Ed. 2d 658 (2000)

When Congress passed a law prohibiting people from taking a young girl from one state where female genital mutilation (FGM) was illegal to another where it was not so they could cut her genitals, the Supreme Court threw it out saying there was no hook in the Constitution to protect little girls. *U.S. v. Jumana Nagarwala*, 2:17-cr-20274, D.C. Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division, 11/20/18

So fathers, your daughters are not safe no matter how hard you try. If you want to protect your little girls, whether they are in diapers or grown, tell your state senator and representatives that they must pass the ERA.

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