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Equal Rights Amendment

A controversial and much debated amendment, the Equal Rights Amendment was first proposed in the U.S. Congress in 1923. Since that time, it has been introduced in Congress on several occasions, most notably in 1972, when it was approved by both houses with a seven-year deadline for ratification. At the end of that seven-year period, however, only 35 of the needed 38 states had ratified the amendment, and some of these states had attempted to rescind their ratifications. Although supporters managed to push a three-year extension of the deadline through Congress in 1979, the amendment still failed to garner the requisite number of state endorsements. Subsequent attempts to pass the amendment through Congress have met with no success.

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.

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