

A Summary Timeline Leading to and Post Passage of the ERA
(mostly taken from US News and World Report)

Date	Event
1769	The colonies adopt the English system decreeing women cannot own property in their own name or keep their own earnings. This system was called coverture, and women were covered under the law by a man from birth. At birth, her rights were subsumed by her father and upon marriage to her husband. Unless she was a widow, she had essentially the same rights as a child, a slave or a man declared mentally unfit.
1777	All states pass laws which take away women's right to vote.
1786	Abigail Adams encourages her husband not to forget the ladies.
1789	Effective date of the US Constitution.
1839	The first state (Mississippi) grants women the right to hold property in their own names – <u>with</u> permission from their husbands.
1855	In <i>Missouri v. Celia</i> , a slave, a Black woman is declared to be property without a right to defend herself against a master's act of rape (conviction appealed, Missouri Supreme Court rejected review).
1865	The 13th Amendment is passed and ratified abolishing slavery. "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."
1866	The 14th Amendment is passed by Congress, with "citizens" and "voters" understood as "male" in the Constitution. (Ruth Bader Ginsberg would later argue for and prevail in having courts consider a more expansive interpretation). "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

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1870	The 15th Amendment is ratified. “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”
1890	The first state (Wyoming) grants women the right to vote in all elections.
1900	By this year, every state had passed legislation granting married women the right to keep their own wages and to own property in their own name.
1920	Women obtain the right to vote (white women – women of color continued to have difficulties until the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed by Congress) “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”
1923	ERA first introduced to Congress. US Attorney General declared that it was legal for women to wear trousers anywhere. The prohibition of trousers for women was enforced in US states was not only by social custom, but by laws that punished transgressors.
1932	Hattie Wyatt Carasa of Arkansas becomes the first woman elected to the US Senate.
1933	Frances Perkins becomes the first female cabinet member; FDR appointed her Secretary of Labor.
1957	Women obtained the right to serve on federal juries – Civil Rights Act of 1957.
1964	Passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (sex was added last minute to the Civil Rights Act by Judge Howard W. Smith, R., who was known to be hostile towards civil rights for Black people, in what many believed was an attempt to doom the bill). At the time civil rights activists believed that the addition of sex to the bill would severely hurt its chances of being passed. Another theory was that Smith believed that such an amendment would embarrass the northern democrats who opposed civil rights for women since at that time labor unions opposed the clause. Smith also

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	unsuccessfully attempted to amend the Civil Rights Act to provide that no one could be compelled to render a labor or service without his consent (this would absolve business owners from refusing Black patrons).
1965	<p>The Supreme Court establishes the right for married couples to use contraception.</p> <p>The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is passed to prohibit racial discrimination in voting processes.</p>
1968	Lyndon B. Johnson signs an executive order prohibiting sex discrimination by government contractors. (In his first week of office President Trump revoked this order).
1972	<p>ERA passes</p> <p>Supreme Court upholds the right for unmarried couples to use birth control.</p> <p>Juanita Kreps becomes the first woman director of the New York Stock Exchange.</p> <p>The pill became available to unmarried women.</p>
1974	Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 was signed into law allowing women to get bank accounts and credit cards in their own name without needing to have a man co-sign for them. (not all banks and credit card companies complied immediately).
1975	The Supreme Court denies states the right to exclude women from juries. Case - <i>Taylor v. Louisiana</i> .
1981	Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court.
1982	The ERA falls short of the states needed for ratification.
1993	<p>Spousal rape criminalized in all 50 states.</p> <p>NIH Revitalization Act and Pharmaceutical Testing Fairness Act – ensures women and minorities are included in all clinical research</p>
1994	Women obtain protection under federal law for rape and domestic violence through the Violence Against Women Act. Which provided

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	funding for services for victims, and allowed victims of rape and domestic violence seek civil rights remedies for gender-related crimes. Law has to be reauthorized. Six years later, the Supreme Court invalidates those portions of the law permitting victims of rape, domestic violence, etc. to sue their attackers in federal court finding that Congress exceeded its constitutionally enumerated powers.
1997	Madeleine Albright becomes the first female Secretary of State.
2009	The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act allows victims, usually women, of pay discrimination to file a complaint with the government against their employer within 180 days of their last paycheck.
01-24-2013	The Pentagon rescinded the rule that restricted women from serving in combat units.
01-06-2020	The DOJ issues a memorandum requested by the Trump Administration, stating that the expired time limitation prevents the National Archives from forwarding the ERA to Congress and thus it will not become part of the Constitution.
01-20-2020	Virginia ratifies the ERA, becoming the 38 th state to do so.
01-30-2020	Several states, including Virginia, sue the National Archives
2021	<p>Bill introduced into the US House of Representatives and passed that would have retroactively eliminated the ratification deadline for the ERA. The bill was submitted to the Senate and died without the Senate taking action.</p> <p>The Supreme Court decision <i>Drnovich v. Democratic National Committee</i> reinterpreted section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 – substantially weakening it – ruling held that fears of election fraud could justify rules that had a disparate impact on the groups that the Act sought to protect.</p>
2022	The Supreme Court overturns <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , the landmark case from nearly 50 years earlier that established a right to an abortion.
2023	Congress has a record number of women, with 128 female House members and 25 female Senators.
12-17-2024	The National Archives issued a public statement refusing to publish the ERA
2025	President Trump issues an executive order reversing the executive order from 1968 prohibiting government contractors from discriminating, which includes discrimination based on sex.

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	Executive order re DEI coupled with White House's call from a funding freeze in order to conduct an ideological review of research money – key words targeting research include the words woman and female (as well as black).
02-28-2025	Bill was introduced in Florida House of Representatives seeking to have the ERA ratified.
04-10-2025	The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE) passes the House and is received by the Senate. Some opponents believe that if passed the Act would have a negative impact on those who have recently undergone a name change (generally married women). Others see it as a poll tax based on the costs to obtain the required documents and how the requirements disproportionately impacts women.