



Agenda Materials ERA Resolutions and Chambers of Commerce

Purposes

- To ask the Chamber of Commerce to support the ERA.
- To ask the Chamber to sign a resolution that encourages the NC General Assembly to pass into law a bill to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution.

Economic demographics

- Relevant county and state statistics

Examples:

- a. According to UNC-Chapel Hill's [Carolina Demography](#), girls and women make up **51% of the population** in Buncombe County and that same ratio holds true for the state.
- b. Women make up **48% of North Carolina's labor force** (2.4 million women), which is 1% higher than the national average of 47%.
- c. In 2015, there were over **31,000 female-owned businesses**, with paid employees, in North Carolina, and that number is growing ever year. From 2014 to 2015, the number increased by 4% - which is 1% faster than the national average.
- d. Female-owned firms, with paid employees, represent nearly **20% of all North Carolina businesses**, and that's on par with the national average. Collectively, these NC firms employed over 250,000 people in 2015.
- e. And, the total sales and receipts of female-owned firms, with paid employees, in 2015 was **over \$5 billion dollars**

Equality gap

- [The Status of Women in NC: Employment and Earnings \(SOWNC\)](#)
- [NC Women's Council Report](#)

Key Findings:

- a. Women in North Carolina earn a median income of \$36,400, and an average of \$8,600 less than men. Women of color are especially economically challenged.
- b. The gender earnings ratio narrowed from 73.7% in 2002 to 80.9% in 2016.
- c. The share of women in the labor force decreased from 2002 to 2016.
- d. More than 2 in 5 (41.6%) employed women in North Carolina work in managerial or professional occupations.

ERA benefits

- If working women in North Carolina were paid the same as comparable men, we would reduce the poverty rate among working women by more than half. ([SOWNC](#))
- If working women in NC were paid the same comparable to men, the increase would amount to \$15.6 billion, which is equivalent to 3.0% of the state's GDP in 2016. ([SOWNC](#))

- Equality is important for our economy in this state. Failure to ratify the ERA could make North Carolina less attractive to companies deciding where to locate factories and headquarters. Companies across the spectrum increasingly value the important role played by women and recognize that attracting female talent is important to the company's success. ([Winston & Strawn LLP](#))

History and current bill statuses

- In 1972 an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution passed both houses of the U.S. Congress and was sent to the states for ratification. By a 1982 deadline, only 35 of the required 38 states had ratified the ERA. The ERA has been introduced into every Congress since 1982.
- From 1972 to 1982, the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) deliberated ERA ratification unsuccessfully six times. No ERA advocacy efforts ensued in the NCGA from 1982 to 2014.
- The ERA re-ignited, and was introduced into the NCGA by Senator Floyd B. McKissick, Jr. and Representative Carla Cunningham in the 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019 sessions. No committee hearings have been scheduled. Current ERA bills, [SB184](#) and [H271](#), remain active until the end of 2019 long session because they are exempt from the crossover deadline. New bills may be introduced in 2020 short session.
- Irrespective of a time limit for ratification, the states of Nevada (2017) and Illinois (2018) ratified the ERA, becoming the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh states, respectively, to ratify the amendment. Only one more state needs to ratify. Constitutional law experts find the ERA to still be [legally viable](#).
- There [is no provision for states to rescind](#) their ratifications, and there are federal bills to lift any deadline to remove any questions about viability. One of the federal bills received a hearing in 2019, and is expected to pass on the House floor when presented.

Chamber of Commerce ERA Resolutions

- ERA Resolutions samples for Chambers (included)
- Discussion Chamber procedure for adoption (Chamber would determine)
- Potential Chamber board sponsors (Chamber input would be needed)
- Resources for Chambers
[Legalize Equality](#) (30 min. short film; ERA-NC will provide copy)
[ERA-NC Alliance Speaker's Bureau](#)
[Winston and Strawn LLC](#)

Next actions

- Determined jointly with all attendees at meeting led by Chamber members
- Set next meeting date
- Follow up as necessary

Adjourn

Thank Chamber members and partners