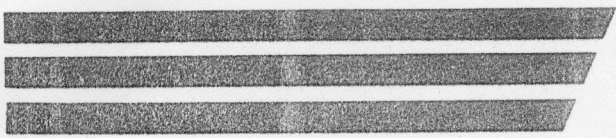


# NEWS



from

Paul

Tsongas

**U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

SENATOR PAUL E. TSONGAS

STATEMENT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WOMEN'S CAUCUS

June 24, 1982

A decade-long campaign for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment is drawing to a close. It is now apparent that the march toward equal rights for women and men in this country must pause before it reaches its destination.

Thirty-five states, containing 72 percent of all Americans, have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. The total falls only three short of the number required to adopt the ERA as the 27th Amendment to the Constitution.

If ratification fails in the next few days, as now seems the inescapable prospect, we will have to pause. But we will not rest until our journey is complete. I intend to reintroduce the Amendment in the Senate, along with my colleague, Bob Packwood of Oregon. So far, we have enlisted 41 cosponsors, and we are working for more. In the House a similar initiative is underway, led by Congressman Edwards and Congresswoman Schroeder.

Reintroduction of the ERA means that its supporters, who already have brought the measure so far, must continue to persevere. It ought to mean, as well, that the Democratic Party will commit itself to the ERA with still greater resolve. The party has much to offer in heightening the political awareness of women at the grassroots, as well as recruiting and organizing women in campaigns for elective office.

In time the nation will embrace the ERA, for it is a cause that is just. It is a cause that inspired seven women to fast inside the Illinois State House, endangering their health, but at the same time eloquently stating the depth of their commitment.

It is a cause that ultimately will guarantee women the protection against sex discrimination that they have been denied until now.

On other occasions, I have elaborated on the arguments for the ERA. And I intend to do so again. I do not want to belabor those points today.

Suffice it to say that, despite the undeniable gains that women have achieved in this country, they are still paid only 64 cents to every dollar paid to men. Despite all the laws now on the books, more than 800 sections of the U.S. Code still contain sexually biased terminology inconsistent with this nation's purported commitment to equal rights. And despite protestations to the contrary, this Administration in the White House is actually retreating on equal employment, education, credit and other economic and social issues affecting women.

The polls show unmistakably that the vast majority of the American people favor passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. That the Congress must start anew, despite 10 years of effort, to achieve the people's will in providing equal rights for women is a testimony to the ERA obstructionists.

We will prevail, however, if we persevere. And I have no doubts that we will persevere.

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