

## **MN ERA HF 501**

### **LETTER TESTIMONY**

#### **House State Government Finance & Policy Committee**

April 3, 2025

Dear Chairs Klevorn, Nash and committee members,

My name is Ann Treacy. I'm a Board member for Women's March MN and Board Vice President for ERA Minnesota. I write in support of the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment, HF 501.

I have testified in person/Zoom in the past (2022 and 2023) with my mother (Elaine Treacy) and two of my three daughters (Lily and Aine O'Donnell).

At the time, my mom spoke about the barriers she faced growing up as a woman. No sports for girls, not allowed to be a police patrol, needed her husband's signature to get a credit card, despite being fully employed herself, fired from a job teaching high school because she was pregnant. (She was married but even that shouldn't matter.) As a result of external barriers, my mom learned to reduce expectations for herself. Before she retired, my mom was a senior systems analyst for the City of St Paul but what she wanted to do was go to law school. Unfortunately, after a life of barriers, she didn't think it was possible. The ERA levels the playfield for our dreams because it combats discrimination that creates these barriers.

Things were better for me. I walked through the doors my mom opened. I have two master's degrees. I work in technology. But over the years, I have found that I was not paid as much as male counterparts. I have been talked over and dismissed, and had men translate for me. "I think what she's trying to say..." when there was no need. Securing equal rights might not change this but it would set a tone that would. Equal rights would have helped my mom speak up, and equal rights would also help others to listen.

My daughters are living in a new world entirely. They could play sports, but the boys still got the best gym times. My robotics daughter felt the second-class status at matches, where boys looked right over her, until they saw her robot perform. Their school uniform rules were designed around what wouldn't distract the boys. Unfortunately, that twinge of inequality is turning into a wedge. My daughters are losing rights as our country is facing some of the most significant attacks on bodily autonomy and self-determination we have ever seen.

Even more worrisome, is the impact of inequality on their transgender and nonbinary friends who are running into the same roadblocks her grandmother encountered. Sports opportunities are limited – even bathroom access is becoming difficult. (Can you think of a more basic need or right?) There is blatant discrimination to the point of being unsafe. And just as it has done for generations, discrimination has short- and long-term impacts; some citizens are still limited in expectations and dreams.

The loss is not only felt by the individual. Because of limited gender equality, the community is not reaping the benefits of our best at any age or generation. As a community we are losing talents, skills and creativity by not recognizing that while we are all different, we are also all equal. We are benching some of our best players. Equal rights will change that.

I urge this committee — and this legislature — to empower Minnesotans to enshrine in our state constitution the most inclusive possible Equal Rights Amendment.

The Minnesota ERA would offer everyone the strongest possible protections against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, or sex — including pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation — no matter who's in power in state government.

Thank you.

Ann Treacy, board member  
Women's March MN  
ERA Minnesota