

# Fifty Years Later, Voters Support Passing the Equal Rights Amendment

JUNE 2, 2022

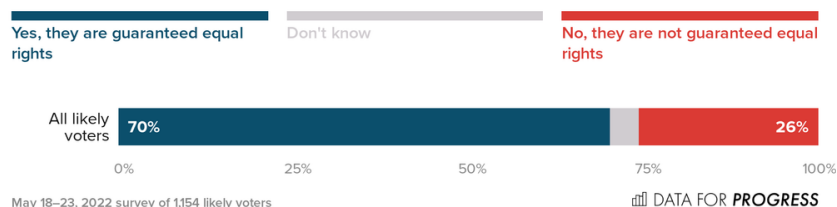
By **Sabrina Jacobs**

The leaked Supreme Court draft opinion overturning *Roe v. Wade* serves as an important reminder that women do not have equal protection under the law. By 1972, both chambers of Congress had passed the Equal Rights Amendment, a proposed constitutional amendment that would guarantee equal rights for all citizens regardless of sex. Unfortunately, two-thirds of the states did not ratify the ERA in time for it to be passed into law. Fifty years later, women are still fighting for abortion access, equal pay, and maternal healthcare. In the wake of the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* draft opinion, it’s crucial that we revive the ERA.

The Declaration of Independence says that “all men are created equal,” pointedly leaving women out of the equation. Interestingly, [a new poll](#) by Data for Progress finds 70 percent of voters mistakenly believe women and men are guaranteed equal rights in the Constitution.

## Most Voters Mistakenly Believe Women and Men Are Guaranteed Equal Rights Under the Constitution

As far as you know, are men and women guaranteed equal rights under the U.S. Constitution?

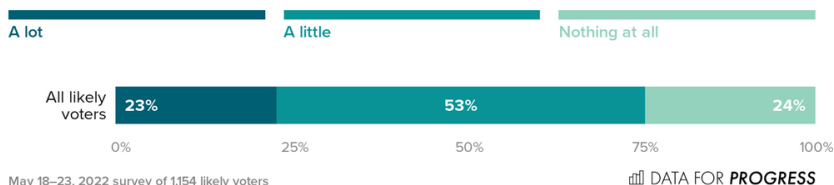




second-wave feminism in the 1970s. Women like Shirley Chisholm, Bella Abzug, and Gloria Steinem were key in advocating for the ERA, starting the National Women’s Political Caucus, and organizing the first National Women's Conference. However, awareness surrounding the ERA has fallen in recent decades. According to recent polling, 53 percent of voters know “a little” about the ERA and only 23 percent know “a lot.”

### A Majority of Voters Have Heard About the Equal Rights Amendment

How much, if anything, have you heard about the Equal Rights Amendment?

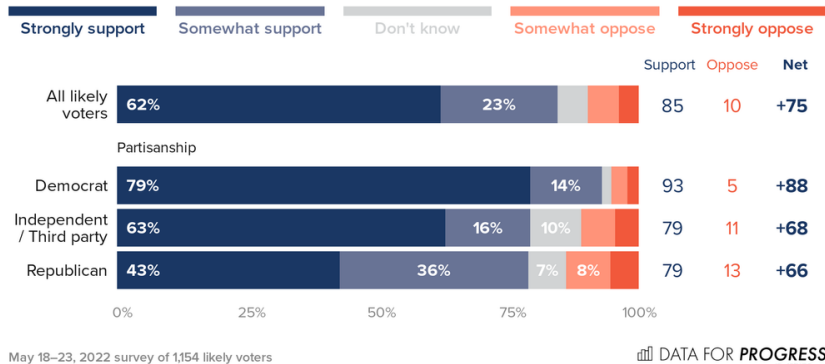


Despite the need for an increase in ERA education, 85 percent of voters say that they would support Congress passing the Equal Rights Amendment, including 93 percent of Democrats, 79 percent of Independents, and 79 percent of Republicans.

### An Overwhelming Majority of Voters Support Congress Passing the Equal Rights Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The ERA would guarantee equal legal rights for all citizens regardless of their sex.

Would you support or oppose Congress passing the Equal Rights Amendment?





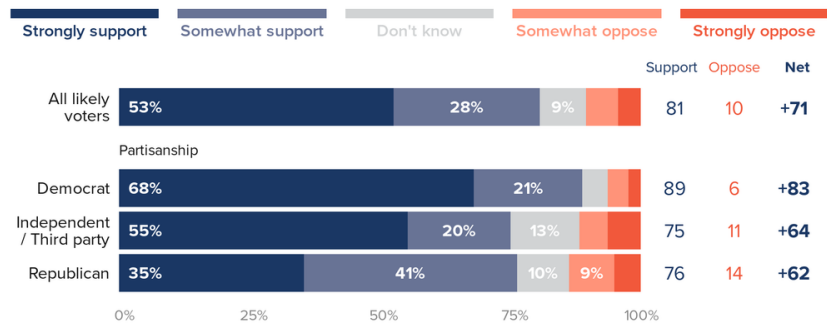
have to pass new legislation for it. After learning the ERA passed both chambers of Congress with two-thirds majority bipartisan support in 1972, 81 percent of voters say they would support such legislation.

### Most Voters Support Congress Enacting the ERA After Learning of Bipartisan Support

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The ERA would guarantee equal legal rights for all citizens regardless of their sex.

In 1972, the ERA passed both chambers of Congress with two-thirds majority bipartisan support, but failed to be ratified by enough states in time to pass into law. Congress would have to act in order for the ERA to be eligible to become law.

Knowing this, would you support or oppose Congress passing legislation to enact the Equal Rights Amendment?



May 18-23, 2022 sample of 561 voters



A formal protection under law guaranteeing gender equality is not an anomaly. Countries like Canada, France, Ireland, Sweden, and Spain all have legislation ensuring that women have equal rights to men. For example, Sweden passed its gender equality policy in 1994 and France adopted the Act on Real Equality Between Men and Women in 2014. After learning about gender equality laws in other countries, 81 percent of voters say they would support the ERA, including 92 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of Independents, and 70 percent of Republicans.



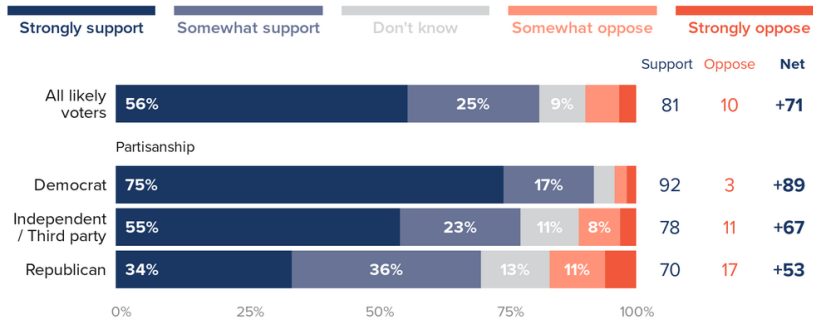
**Learning Our Countries History Matters Equal Rights**

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The ERA would guarantee equal legal rights for all citizens regardless of their sex.

In 1972, the ERA passed both chambers of Congress with two-thirds majority bipartisan support, but failed to be ratified by enough states in time to pass into law. Congress would have to act in order for the ERA to be eligible to become law.

There is currently no formal protection under the Constitution for women to have equal rights to men – something which other countries like Canada, France, Ireland, Spain, and Sweden have.

Knowing this, would you support or oppose Congress passing legislation to enact the Equal Rights Amendment?



May 18-23, 2022 sample of 591 voters



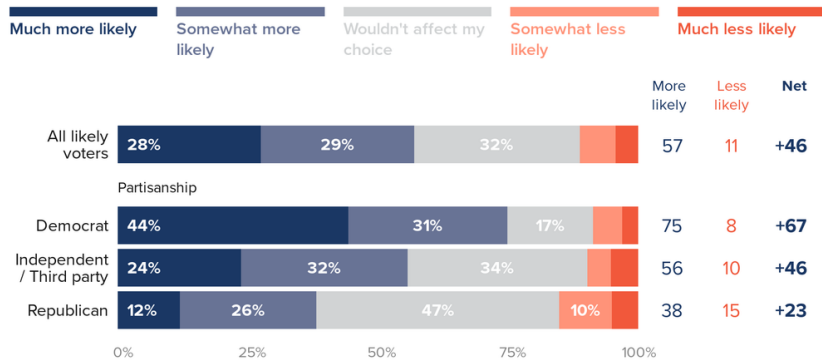
Ensuring gender equality can have an overarching effect on many issues that are important to voters, such as maternal health and closing the wage gap. In order to continue working toward becoming a country where gender equality is protected by the Constitution, it's crucial that we vote lawmakers into office who will fight for the Equal Rights Amendment. Fifty-seven percent of voters say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported the ERA, including Democrats by a +67-point margin, Independents by a +46-point margin, and Republicans by a +23-point margin.



### Support the Equal Rights Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The ERA would guarantee equal legal rights for all citizens regardless of their sex.

Would knowing that a candidate for Congress supported passing the ERA make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate, or does it make no difference?



May 18–23, 2022 survey of 1,154 likely voters



We may have lost the battle for the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, but that doesn't mean the fight is over in 2022. There is so much at stake for gender equality, and every protection that women have under the law makes a difference. Educating people about the ERA and forging a path forward for equal rights will guarantee a safer, more just country where women can thrive.

Sabrina Jacobs (@bri\_jacobs) is a digital fellow at Data for Progress.

## Survey Methodology

## DATA FOR **PROGRESS**

From May 18 to 23, 2022, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,154 likely voters. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, and race. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is  $\pm 3$  percentage points.

N=1,154 unless otherwise specified. Some values may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

**[1]** As far as you know, are men and women guaranteed equal rights under the U.S. Constitution?

Yes, they have equal rights . . .

No, they do not have equal rights . . .

Don't know

**[2]** How much, if anything, have you heard about the Equal Rights Amendment?

A lot . . .

A little . . .

Nothing



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