



Dear Chairs Klevorn, Nash and committee members,

On behalf of AAUW MN, I am writing today to express our support of HF501, the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment.

Established in 1881, AAUW is one of the nation's oldest women's advocacy groups. As an organization, we seek to advance equity for women and girls, recognizing that a lens of intersectionality and inclusivity is crucial in this mission. Across our state, AAUW-MN has more than two dozen branches and represents over 1,600 members.

As Minnesotans we value freedom and equality for every person. This includes the freedom for each child to receive a high-quality public education, the freedom to make your own reproductive choices, and the freedom to receive life-saving gender affirming care.

Across the country, we are seeing attacks on reproductive freedom and transgender rights in some of the most significant attacks on bodily autonomy and self-determination that we have ever seen. Minnesota has stood as a North Star against these attacks, passing legislation to protect these freedoms and human rights. While these have been important steps to take, the best way to protect these freedoms in the future is through a constitutional amendment that includes explicit protections for gender and reproductive freedom.

Twenty-three states currently have Equal Rights Amendments in their state constitutions, and it is past time that Minnesota adds its name to this growing list. The proposed language in HF 501 would offer *all* Minnesotans 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.

Discrimination is not a Minnesota value, and it is important that the language of our state constitution reflects this as clearly as possible.

AAUW MN is proud to support HF501 and we urge the committee to empower the people of this state to enshrine our commitment to freedom, fairness, and equal rights in our constitution — once and for all.

Sincerely,

*Kelsey Waits*

*President, AAUW MN*