



CONTACT:

Alfonso Nevarez
Chair Loudoun County Democratic Committee
chair@loudoundemocrats.org
202.286.5096

Supporting the Equal Rights Amendment is the Right Thing To Do

Leesburg, VA - At the October 2, 2018 Board of Supervisors meeting, several Republican Supervisors claimed “partisan politics” when a vote to add the Equal Rights Amendment to Loudoun’s legislative agenda came before them for a second time. Although the 6-3 vote to reject inclusion of the ERA was split down party lines, the proposed constitutional amendment has widespread bipartisan support.

“The Equal Rights Amendment, which states that ‘Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,’ is a necessary change to our constitution because America’s highest courts continue to be dominated by judges who are men,” said Alfonso Nevarez, Chair of the Loudoun County Democrats. “The persistent gender imbalance in our judicial system, along with the lack of explicit language in our constitution guaranteeing gender equality, sustains biased interpretations of the law which systematically deny the civil rights of people who have been discriminated against on account of their gender. Passing the ERA is long overdue, and it is the responsibility of every elected official to facilitate its passage.”

Historically, objections to passage of the ERA focused on preserving traditional gender roles, where everything from domestic responsibilities to career paths, and from attire to leisure activities, were strictly enforced along gender lines. In 2018, opponents of the ERA have a much harder time defining why they oppose it.

“The most common objection from opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment is that it is unnecessary,” Nevarez continued, “To that I ask, ‘Who is harmed by its passage?’ Polls show that the overwhelming majority of Americans support passage of an amendment that guarantees gender equality under the law. If anyone, Democrat or Republican, wants to oppose this change, they should be pressed to come up with something more articulate than dismissal of its necessity.”

Republicans on the Board of Supervisors have stated that the issue is one that is national in scope, and that the County should focus on local issues exclusively. However, the issue of scope did not deter several of the Board’s current members from weighing in on the issue of immigration when they sought to direct the County’s staff to question the Federal Government’s unaccompanied minors policy in October of 2014. (see attached)

“Supervisors Buona, Higgins, and Letourneau had no problem voting for a motion whose purpose was to launch a partisan debate over immigration when it suited their partisan bend. It is beyond hypocritical to oppose inclusion of the ERA on the basis of scope. Federal, state, local – we’re all impacted by gender discrimination. If they don’t like the ERA they should have the courage of their convictions to state what it is, precisely, that they don’t like about it.”