



This symposium will feature panel discussions throughout the day populated by historians, state legislators, attorneys, and advocates, all focusing on the Equal Rights Amendment. New Jersey has had an Equal Rights Amendment in its State Constitution since 1947. The symposium will explore the history of the Equal Rights Amendment, the way NJ's constitution and legislature is impacted by the state's ERA provision, the current state of advocacy for equal rights amendments, and how NJ's ERA impacts the practice of law in the state.

Attendees can expect to gain detailed knowledge of the history of the Equal Rights Amendment at both the state and federal levels; information about the ways in which the state constitutional provision is used by legislators in crafting law and policy; nuanced understanding of current and past lawsuits impacting the current status of the law and its interpretations; and context for how the NJ constitution and the federal amendment's status impact the current practice of law in the state of New Jersey.

Breakfast and Opening Remarks

8:30-9:30

The ERA: How We Got Here

9:30-10:45

Chair: Dr. Erica Ryan

Panelists: Dr. Vanessa May, Dr. Stacie Taranto, Dr. Kirsten Swinth,

Historians of women and gender, labor, race, politics, and law will discuss the early history of the ERA, and then focus on the ways the amendment was both embraced and challenged by different groups of women activists throughout the twentieth century. They will offer perspective on just how complicated the question of

“ordinary equality” was and remains, and the different ways that idea has been used to defend as well as disparage the movement for constitutional gender equality.

We the Women:

Women in NJ Government Taking on the ERA from the Inside

11-12:15

Chair: Assemblywoman Carol Murphy

Panelists: Assemblywoman Gabriela Mosquera, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblywoman Michele Matsikoudis, Assemblywoman Victoria A. Flynn

While published copies of the US Constitution may not yet include the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment, New Jersey has guaranteed equal rights for women and men in its state Constitution since 1947. How does Article I of the NJ Constitution impact the way laws are written, debated, and passed? How does it influence the work of legislators in our state government to create laws that protect and promote the interests of women and other traditionally underrepresented groups? Five elected New Jersey Assemblywomen discuss what it means to craft and consider laws that reflect NJ’s constitutional mandate for equal rights.

Lunch and Exhibitors

12:15-1

Keynote introduction and address

1-1:20

Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Evelyn Padin, United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey

From Seneca Falls to Congressional Halls:

A Century of ERA Advocacy Work

1:30-2:45

Chair: Roberta Francis

Panelists: Ting Ting Cheng, Esq., Kate Kelly, Esq., AJ Conroy, Esq., Ria Tabacco Mar, Esq.

The long struggle to enshrine equal rights in the U.S. Constitution has taken many forms over the years. From strategizing politically to get the ERA ratified, to writing articles, managing websites, marching in the streets, advising policy makers, lobbying, and more, these panelists represent decades of efforts to ensure that in the eyes of the law, equal means equal. They will discuss current and past strategies, and the many ways organizations and individuals are working for a constitutional guarantee of equal rights without regard to sex.

Ordinary Equality in the Practice of Law

3-4:15

Chair: Thomas Prol, Esq.

Panelists: Kim Yonta, Esq., Emily Kaller, Esq., Cynthia Gentile, J.D., SHRM-CP

New Jersey has long been a standard bearer for legal equality. Legal professionals from across the state will discuss the multifaceted history of women's legal rights in New Jersey and explore the evolution of women's rights in New Jersey since its founding; as well as the way Article I of the state's 1947 Constitution has shaped those rights in the modern era . They will also explore the complexity of federal Equal Rights Amendment litigation, considering the myriad lawsuits and unprecedented controversy around the ratification, publication, and status of the amendment.

Cocktail Hour

4:30-5:30

Drinks, passed hors d'oeuvres, exhibitors.