

2013-15 Biennium Report: Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

Sharon Alter, Issue Specialist

In May 2014, LWVIL submitted witness slips to urge Illinois House members to place ERA on House floor for a vote after the Illinois Senate ratified the ERA. When the Illinois House did not vote on this issue in May, LWVIL sent two TFAs in November asking League members to contact their state representatives to urge them to support ERA ratification during the fall veto session. In this TFA effort, LWVIL was part of a coalition including Illinois National Organization for Women (NOW), Illinois Association of University Women (AAUW), plus other supporting organizations. Unfortunately, the Illinois House never had a floor vote on ERA ratification in November 2014 because House support was a few votes less than the 3/5 majority necessary for ratification.

In January 2015 with a newly elected Illinois General Assembly and a new legislative session, there were plans to reintroduce the ERA in the Illinois House and Senate for ratification consideration. Although the wording for ERA ratification was drafted, there was no formal proposal in either the Illinois House or Senate. The changed political climate, heightened budget priorities, and lack of sufficient legislative support were among reasons for lack of potential action.

If and when the ERA is reintroduced, it needs 3/5 Illinois House and 3/5 Illinois Senate votes for ratification regardless of whether the vote takes place in the regular legislative session, veto session, or lame duck session.