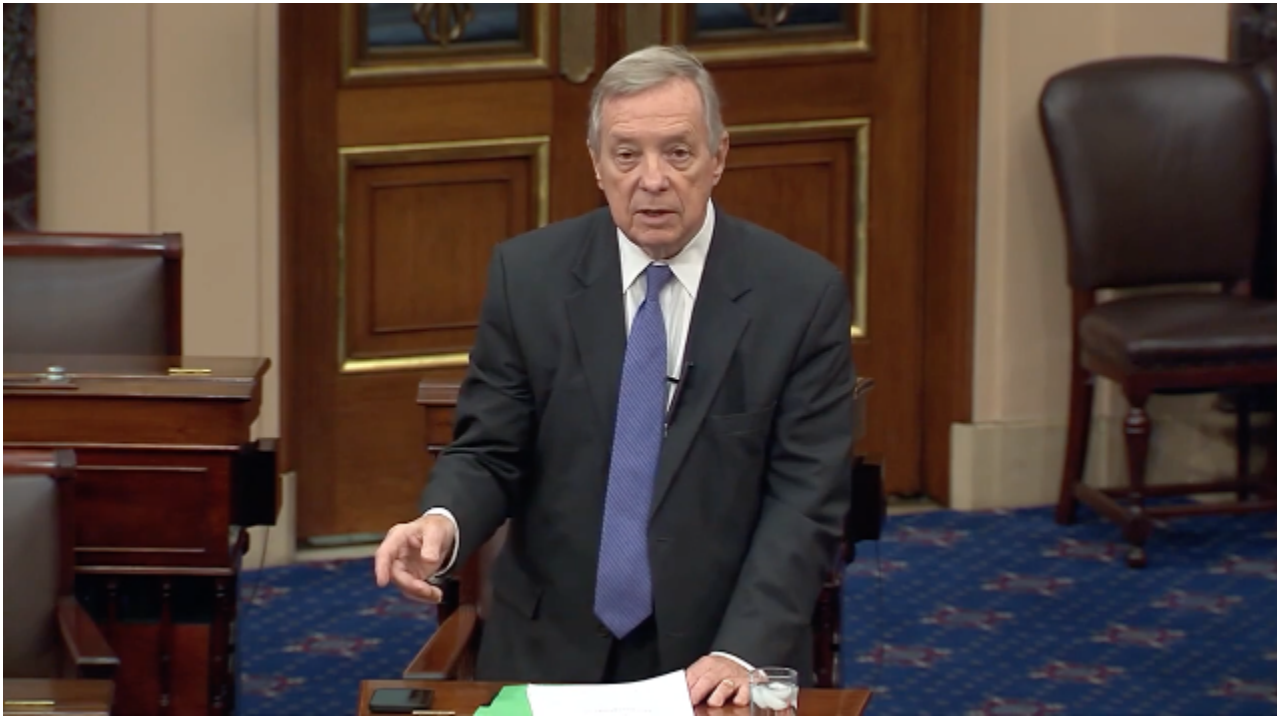


Durbin Calls On His Colleagues To Support The Equal Rights Amendment

by Emily Hampsten
March 3 2023 9:26 AM



WASHINGTON – On the first day of Women’s History Month, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, in a speech on the Senate floor discussed this week’s Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would enshrine gender equality into the Constitution.

“The Equal Rights Amendment was first introduced in 1923—one hundred years ago—and proposed by a leader named Dr. Alice Paul. At the time, she had just won an important victory. She and her fellow suffragists had just led, successfully, the campaign to ratify the 19th Amendment, to give women the right to vote in the United States one hundred years ago,” Durbin said. “Despite this monumental achievement, Dr. Paul

recognized that just the right to vote was not enough for gender equality—but it was the right starting point. So she devoted the remaining years of her life to enshrining gender equality in every facet of American life into the Constitution with the Equal Rights Amendment.”

Durbin continued, “The ERA is a rallying cry for Americans young and old for good reason. As the 28th Amendment to the Constitution, it would ensure that our nation lives up to the promise of real equality. And, frankly, it’s a principle that should be enshrined in the Constitution. Now, 38 states have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment in the past half century. The most recent Virginia in 2020. Thirty-eight is the exact number needed to certify an Amendment to the Constitution. The only thing standing in the way of an Equal Rights Amendment is an arbitrary deadline that Congress included in the preamble... when the amendment passed in 1972.”

Durbin went on to discuss this week’s hearing, where witnesses testified to the necessity of enshrining gender equality into the Constitution and Congress’ role in ERA ratification.

“During the hearing on the ERA, we heard from several witnesses—my own home state Lieutenant Governor, Juliana Stratton—and a young woman whose name is Thursday Williams. She is a first-generation American, a Board Member of the ERA Coalition, and a senior at Trinity College in Connecticut. She spoke on behalf a lot of young people—she is a college senior. Her compelling testimony was a testament to the value of her voice in the conversation. I’m glad she was there... she argued that, today, the American people ‘deserve a Constitution that guarantees equality regardless of sex. A Constitution that we can use as a tool to fight discrimination.’”

Durbin concluded, “Congress approved the ERA 50 years ago. But in doing so, we imposed that arbitrary time limit for ratification. That’s why our hearing yesterday was so important. The members of the Committee were not merely discussing the importance of the ERA, we were urging our colleagues to join us in passing it . This joint resolution already has bipartisan support in both chambers—and I want to salute Senator Murkowski of Alaska for joining us and cosponsoring, with Senator Ben Cardin, this effort. We can’t wait any longer.”

Video of Durbin’s floor speech is available [here](#).

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