



THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

Loop Center  
37 S. Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60603  
372-6600

The Y.W.C.A. National Platform lists the passage of E.R.A. as a top priority item. - Our agency has undergone significant changes in the past few years - those changes have been demanded by women who no longer want to see themselves as "poor things", but as capable human beings not the stereotypes that discrimination breeds.

We feel we must expose the myth of protection. Unfortunately the myth of protection has been fostered by the opposition and accepted by the lawmakers in Illinois. What protections are they talking about? If we are so protected why are women afraid to walk alone on the streets? Why are our courts so crowded with mothers trying to collect child support? Why are we at the bottom of the economic ladder? Why are so many middle aged and elderly women crying in empty households destitute and abandoned? Women are not now protected by the law - the law is not involved in on going marriages. Loving, caring relationships have nothing to do with the law. It is indeed sad that our opposition feels the only reason a man supports his family is because the law says he must. The law is not the reason young women are not now being drafted and the law is not the reason we close bathroom doors.

The Equal Rights Amendment completes the work started by the 19th Amendment and will operate within the context of the total constitution. Rules protecting privacy and actual differences are protected within the structure of the total constitution and will not be changed because of E.R.A. The Amendment is needed to affirm the American dream of equal opportunity. We must have a permanent unifying national statement that will facilitate the changes now being made against sex discrimination. Not to make that statement will deny the wishes of the majority of American men and women.

The opposition places feminists as the enemy of wives and mothers. We ask all of you to look at our record for in that record you can see us working against inadequate protections that now exist for women who choose to stay home with their children. The E.R.A. will hasten the changes in the laws now being suggested to include homemakers under Social Security as productive human beings. Women who support E.R.A. are not the enemy of wives and mothers, the myth of privilege and protection is. We want to destroy the myth that ~~tries to~~ perpetrated our position on the pedestal. Standing on a pedestal is totally immobilizing.

The Y.W.C.A., the thousands of women participating in our activities, pledge unequivocal support of the Equal Rights Amendment. We will continue to work to close the time lag that now exists between the thinking of Illinois legislators and the will of the people.