

Testimony Before the  
Minnesota House State Government Finance and Policy Committee

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*The Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment Is Long Overdue*

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Co-Chair Klevorn, Co-Chair Nash, and members of the State Government Finance and Policy Committee:

Thank you for inviting me. My name is Jill Hasday. I am a Distinguished McKnight University Professor and the Centennial Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota Law School. I teach and write about constitutional law and sex discrimination, among other subjects.

In my time today, I would like to make a simple, but fundamental point: the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment is long overdue.

Adding an ERA to the Minnesota Constitution is important for at least two reasons.

Most broadly, passing the Minnesota ERA would be a powerful expression of the state's fundamental values. The ERA's explicit prohibition on government discrimination based on sex, race, disability, national origin, and more recognizes that no Minnesotan should be a constitutional afterthought. The ERA reaffirms that we all belong at the center of Minnesota's constitutional safeguards and all are entitled to "equal rights under the laws of this state."

More concretely, adding the ERA to the state constitution would provide sturdier protection against bias. Unlike a statutory ban on discrimination, a constitutional amendment cannot be undone through ordinary legislation. The state ERA would protect Minnesotans for generations to come.

Twenty-nine states have already added equal rights amendments to their constitutions. Minnesota should join them. Every Minnesotan deserves constitutional recognition of their equal rights.

Thank you for your time.