

MN ERA HF 501
LETTER TESTIMONY
House State Government Finance & Policy Committee
Mar 31, 2025

Dear Chair Klevorn and members of the State Government Finance & Policy Committee,

YWCA Duluth is a non-profit organization working to empower women and girls, eliminate racism, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. We write in support of the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), HF 501.

We urge this committee — and this legislature — to empower Minnesotans to enshrine in our state constitution the most inclusive possible Equal Rights Amendment.

Our country is facing some of the most significant attacks on bodily autonomy and self-determination we have ever seen. YWCA Duluth unequivocally believes that all people should have access to appropriate healthcare, education, fair wages, safe homes and communities, and the right to vote.

The Minnesota ERA would offer everyone the strongest possible protections against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, or sex — including pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation — no matter who's in power in state government.

YWCA associations have spent over 130 years in the fight for equality, developing programs across the country to uplift and support women and families through leadership development, childcare, housing, victim services, and more. We are a non-partisan organization, and believe that equality is a non-partisan issue.

This ERA has widespread support from individuals across Minnesota, and the backing of labor, health, legal, reproductive justice, LGBTQ+, and philanthropic organizations.

There are few clearer reflections of our values as Minnesotans than our state Constitution, and it is the civic right and responsibility of the people of our state to amend it as needed to ensure that it reflects our values as fully and clearly as possible.

The ERA that stands before you would do exactly this. I urge this committee to empower the people of Minnesota to enshrine our commitment to freedom, fairness, and equal rights in our constitution — once and for all. After years of dedicated efforts to secure equal rights, it's time to trust Minnesotans and give them a say in the fight for equality.

Thank you,

Savannah Swanson
Policy and Advocacy Director
YWCA Duluth