

## **JANETTE DEAN**

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Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Committee  
Minnesota Senate  
Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
95 University Ave. W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for Senate File 37 “Constitutional amendment providing for equality under the law.”**

Dear Chair Latz, Vice Chair Oumou Verbeten and Committee Members:

The State of Minnesota ratified the essential Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as the 26<sup>th</sup> state to do so on February 8, 1973 and should do all it can to help make equal rights a reality in Minnesota itself as well.

During this 2023 session and Women’s History Month, please therefore vote for passage of Senate File 37 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=SF37&y=2023&ssn=0&b=senate>) authored by Honorable Senators Mary Kunesh, Kari Dziedzic, Sandra Pappas, Erin Murphy and Jennifer McEwen.

Upon its passage, I — as one of many — will be very elated and proud to vote yes in 2024 to the question which will be asked of us voters:

“Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended by adding a specific guarantee that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by this state or any of its cities, counties, or other political subdivisions on account of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry, or national origin?”

Not one person in Minnesota who believes our constitutional republic is meant to be “one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” should be satisfied with — nor tolerate — having unequal rights in Minnesota nor our country.

It is certainly every generation’s moral responsibility to help stop the continuing social injustice of our state and national constitutions’ failures to protect all of its residents and citizens as well as visitors who are living in or traveling in our state and country.

Without an ERA at the national level nor the state level presently, many of the harmful social problems and individual situations that sex discrimination still causes right here in Minnesota will be able to continue.

Social justice is defined on the Oxford Reference website as:

“The objective of creating a fair and equal society in which each individual matters, their rights are recognized and protected, and decisions are made in ways that are fair and honest.”

Utilizing ethical human thought as well in its publication, the U.S.-based Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines social justice in a way that also strongly reveals the necessity of the Equal Rights Amendment with its definition of social justice being:

“a state or doctrine of egalitarianism” and egalitarianism being “1: a belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs, and 2: a social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people.”

Social justice — plus the willingness to act for it — are indeed essential to human ethics, progress and democracy.

I, therefore, call upon all Minnesotans (including all legislators in the Minnesota Legislature) to help each other in many areas of needed social justice, including by helping to pass Senate File 37 as well as the 2024 General Election question which stipulates that essential and comprehensive equal rights will be added to Minnesota’s own constitution with an effective date of January 1, 2025.

Per the DFL Action Agenda that I and many others worked on through the submission of resolutions at our 2022 DFL caucuses and convention, our party (along with several of our fair-minded non-partisan allies and some allies in other parties):

“Supports banning discrimination on the basis of gender/sex by strongly advocating for the removal of the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and also for the passage of legislation to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution. (see: page 2 of the category of Civil, Human, Natural, & Constitutional Rights at: <https://dfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/DFL-Action-Agenda-2022-1-1.pdf>).”

Please therefore join our all-important effort this session that 1) Congress recognize that the Equal Rights Amendment is already valid due to the required 38 state ratifications without regard to any former unethical and unfair deadline on something as basic as equal rights to any true democracy and that 2) the State of Minnesota also pass its own all-important and comprehensive state ERA to support and protect the equality of ALL Minnesotans.

Thank you,

*Janette Dean*

*Minnesota-raised Janette Dean is an environmental policy and human rights advocate and organizer who helped Nevada ratify the Equal Rights Amendment as the lead grassroots organizer there from 2014-2017 (see: <https://sites.google.com/view/nevadansfortheera/>). She currently lives and works in her home state of Minnesota. To see the beginning steps of the Equal Rights Amendment’s journey and Nevada’s steps to ratification victory, visit: <https://prezi.com/view/ClzKezQAEDP4lV9dBHb/>.*