

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

7-12-79

Dear Judy -

The final process  
changed the draft a little,  
but you'll see this is  
essentially your version - thanks  
for your marvelous help!

Suab

WAS VERY PLEASED TO BE INCLUDED AT CAMP DAVID  
yesterday

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WASHINGTON

THE ERA: FULL PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN

The Equal Rights Amendment must be ratified.

The story of American democracy is a story of struggle and growth. Over the past two hundred years, basic human rights and liberties originally enjoyed by only a minority have been extended to protect many more Americans. The ERA is simply the next chapter in this inspiring story.

Since the turn of the century, women have made dramatic progress -- including the Constitutional guarantee of the right to vote. Yet, in many ways the 51 percent of our population who are women are still second-class citizens today. The choices and opportunities open to them remain limited unfairly.

Over the years, women have suffered from job discrimination and unequal pay, and the families they help support have also suffered. In the last 20 years, the earnings gap between men and women has actually widened. In some states, women who are married still are deprived of legal and economic rights. Women have been denied the right to own property, bring legal suits, and even buy automobile insurance in their own names.

Much has been done to redress the inequality of women by a number of States and the Congress. I have directed my entire Administration to do everything possible to advance the status of women. I have pushed vigorously to increase the number of women in the Federal judiciary. But all these efforts still are not enough. Because the principle of equality between men and women is not yet part of our Constitution, the laws affecting women could be changed easily to reduce current safeguards. The only way to achieve full legal equality for women is to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

The ERA is not a novel idea. It was first introduced in 1923. The fight for it began when my mother was a young woman. After careful and lengthy debate, Congress submitted it to the States for ratification on March 22, 1972. All but three of the necessary 38 states have ratified it. Last year Congress passed, and I signed, legislation extending the ratification deadline to June 30, 1982.

As a husband, a father, and a grandfather, I support the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA does not say that men and women are the same. It simply says that the law cannot penalize women because they are female. I do not believe my daughter should have fewer rights than my sons.

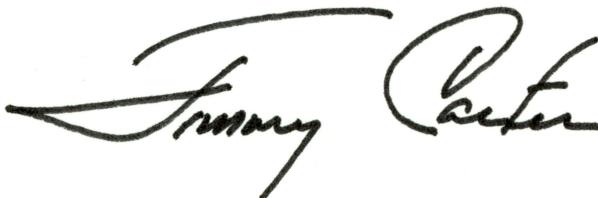
The ERA does not impose new roles or unfair responsibilities on women. The ERA will not alter our traditional family structure. It simply gives women the legal rights that every human being deserves and that American men now enjoy.

As Governor of Georgia, I supported the Equal Rights Amendment. As President, I will continue to strongly support ratification of the ERA. My wife Rosalynn and my daughter-in-law Judy have spent countless hours speaking for the Amendment throughout the country.

The last six Presidents have advocated the ERA. The Congress of the United States has voiced its support for the ERA twice -- once when the Amendment was passed in Congress and once again when the time limit for ratification was extended. Both the Democratic and Republican parties support the Amendment, and there is widespread support by a substantial majority of Americans for the ERA.

The United States was founded two centuries ago on a Constitution that promised justice, liberty, and equality for all men. Only an Amendment in our Constitution can guarantee women the same rights and opportunities. Today, the United States proudly speaks out on behalf of human rights for all the people of the world. We must be no less vigilant in our defense of human rights at home.

I urge you to join me in championing the cause of equal rights by supporting the Equal Rights Amendment so that all of us can be full partners in our beloved Nation.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.