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SCHAKOWSKY APPLAUDS INTRODUCTION OF EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today applauded the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment, saying that "women must be guaranteed the same rights and protections as men under the U.S. Constitution." The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed Congress in 1972 but lapsed in 1982 when it fell three states short of ratification. The ERA was ratified by only 35 out of 38 needed states.

However, state legislators in Illinois and other states are using an alternative strategy and are introducing legislation to ratify the amendment that was passed by Congress in 1972. According to www.equalrightsamendment.org, the reasoning behind this strategy is that "it is likely that Congress could choose to legislatively adjust or repeal the existing time limit constraint on the ERA, determine whether or not state ratifications after the expiration of a time limit in a proposing clause are valid, and promulgate the ERA after the 38th state ratifies." Below is Schakowsky's statement:

"I am pleased to join my colleagues, Congresswoman Maloney and Congressman Andrews, and the Dean of the House, John Dingell, to announce the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment. I am looking forward to the day when we celebrate the ratification of this amendment instead of appearing at another news conference to announce the reintroduction of the ERA in the next Congress.

"In her remarks, while introducing the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, Alice Paul declared, 'We shall not be safe until the principle of equal rights is written into the framework of our government.' Yet more than 80 years later, in the year 2005, women are still fighting for those equal rights to be 'written into the framework of our government.' That is unconscionable. In 21st Century America, women must be guaranteed the same rights and protections as men under the U.S. Constitution"

"President Bush and my Republican colleagues often speak of what has been accomplished in Iraq and in Afghanistan by the United States to promote and to protect women's rights and freedoms and of the Constitutional guarantees for women in those countries. But with the introduction of the ERA, the Republican Party has an

opportunity to demonstrate that same zeal for equal women's rights right here at home by publicly and vocally supporting this Constitutional Amendment.[] []

"States, however, are not waiting for Congress to act on the ERA.[] My good friend and Illinois State Representative Lou Lang has introduced a resolution to ratify the amendment that was passed by Congress in 1972.[] This alternative strategy could help speed the process of making this vitally critical amendment a part of our Constitution more quickly.

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"We should be working together to strengthen the guaranteed protections of our Constitution by ratifying amendments that unite, not divide, us.[] And clearly the ERA is such an amendment."