



For Immediate Release

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**New statewide alliance calls for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in NC
News conference and panel discussion to be held at Wake Forest University**

Winston Salem, NC, April 6, 2016 – ERA-NC Alliance, a new non-partisan, statewide organization, will announce its formation and hold a panel discussion, “Why the ERA? Why Now?” at Wake Forest University April 12.

Media are invited to the formal launch announcement by ERA-NC Alliance at **2:30 p.m.** in DeTamble Auditorium located in Tribble Hall, followed by the panel discussion at **3:30 p.m.**

The panel discussion, sponsored by the Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Wake Forest, will explore why the Equal Rights Amendment failed in the 1980s and what effects the ERA could have if it is ratified. It is free and open to the public.

The Alliance is working toward ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in North Carolina as part of a nationwide campaign, whether by starting over or by achieving ratification by three more states to reach the 38 needed for inclusion in the U.S. Constitution. Since its failure to attain ratification in the early 1980s, many laws have been passed to achieve gender equality in the U.S. However, these laws are not uniform or comprehensive, and are subject to be rolled back by legislators; in too many cases they have failed at the judicial level, where gender discrimination does not receive strict judicial scrutiny as do cases of discrimination based on race or religion. The ERA-NC Alliance members believe that only when women are written into the Constitution will true gender equality be possible.

The Alliance chose to announce its formal launch on April 12th, Equal Pay Day, which symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year. This pay gap is even larger for black and Latina women, and is just one of the many ways that women experience inequality in the United States.

Marena Groll, founder of NC 4 ERA, says recent discriminatory bills like HB2 make the case for constitutional protection. “It’s bad enough that it targets women with the restriction on minimum wage; women and racial minorities are minimum wage workers the state is willing to put at great risk. But it also restricts legal actions available to women who are discriminated against in the workplace.”

“Even though black and Latina women are more greatly undervalued when it comes to our pay, all women are undervalued in our society,” explains Dr. E. Faye Williams, President and CEO of the National Congress of Black Women. “It’s time to change that now, and we want to be a part of making the necessary changes.”

News conference speakers include:

- Roberta Madden, Co-Director of Ratify ERA NC

- Dr. E. Faye Williams, National President and CEO of the National Congress of Black Women
- Senator Floyd McKissick, District 20, Durham, Granville Counties, sponsor of the ERA bill in the NC Senate in 2015
- Representative Evelyn Terry, District 71, Forsyth County, co-sponsor of the ERA bill in the NC House in 2015

The panel discussion, titled “*Why the ERA? Why Now?*” will begin at 3:30 p.m.

Panelists include:

- Dr. E. Faye Williams, National President and CEO of the National Congress of Black Women
- Representative Evelyn Terry, District 71, Forsyth County, co-sponsor of the ERA bill in the NC House in 2015
- Marena Groll, Founder of NC 4 ERA
- Michael Pisapia, Wake Forest University Assistant Professor of Politics and International Affairs

Roberta Madden, Ratify ERA NC Co-Director, has been a passionate proponent of the ERA for 44 years. She and Groll are co-chairs of the ERA-NC Alliance. “We are now on the brink of a national consensus that women and men must have equal rights,” Madden notes. “The formation of the new ERA-NC Alliance is a sign that we will never, never, never give up.”

Most speakers are available for interviews before the event; there will also be a limited availability of press conference speakers for individual interviews immediately following the press conference. Please contact Audrey Muck for arrangements. Additional information and resources are available at www.era-nc.org.

Text of the Equal Rights Amendment, first introduced in Congress in 1923:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

About the ERA-NC Alliance:

These events mark the formal launch of the ERA-NC Alliance. Membership is open to individuals and organizations committed to the ratification of the ERA. At this time, lead organizations include the American Association of University Women of NC, Democratic Women of NC, League of Women Voters of NC, NC 4 ERA, NC Business & Professional Women, NC National Organization for Women, Ratify ERA-NC and the Women’s Forum of NC. The Alliance operates in direct collaboration with the national ERA Coalition (www.eracoalition.org).

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