



# Vermont and the Equal Rights Amendments: A Case against Exceptionalism

*“I find it difficult to believe that Vermont could be so different from the rest of the country.”*

Phyllis Schlafly, November 1985

By MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

**O**n January 12, 1973, Madeleine Kunin of Burlington opened her legislative career with a time-tested appeal to the integrity and fairness of the “gentlemen of the House.” As a newly elected Democratic member of the Vermont House of Representatives, she risked the disapproval of her colleagues for inserting her voice into debate too early in the session. But she forged ahead anyway, eager to support the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution by countering the fears of a conservative woman from Readsboro. Kunin contended that ratification of the ERA would not “stop anyone from being a gentleman or a lady.” This is not a “women’s liberation amendment,” she noted, even though she certainly

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did not object to the term. Rather, it was invented by our grandmothers long ago and followed from a hallowed “Vermont tradition of respect for individual rights and opposition to slavery.” Not only would men be able to maintain their roles as protectors and providers, but women would not necessarily shed their bras, leave their parlors and kitchens, divorce their husbands, and proclaim sexual freedom. It was simply a matter of “equality for all our citizens.” To her delight, the house ratified the ERA that day, 120 to 28, and a month later the senate concurred, 19 to 8. As Kunin left the hall, a fellow representative warned her, “Just because you won your first one, don’t think you’re going to win them all.”<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for Kunin, those words would prove prophetic, at least with respect to the ERA. Vermont was the twenty-eighth state to approve the federal amendment, which declared that “equality of rights shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex,” but ultimately it failed to be ratified. Originally introduced in 1923, the ERA had languished in Congress for decades, blocked by male and female labor leaders who sought to keep women workers in a separate lower-paid labor pool that afforded them protection from long hours and harsh conditions. By the mid-1960s, passage of more inclusive fair labor standards, the Equal Pay Act, and the rise of feminism changed the political climate, leading Democratic Representative Shirley Chisholm of New York to reintroduce the ERA into Congress in 1969. With bipartisan support, it passed in March 1972, and within five years, thirty-five states had ratified the amendment. Yet as conservatives gained power within the Republican Party, the ERA became associated with the upheaval of the 1960s and the radical wing of the women’s movement. Despite an extended deadline to June 1982, proponents were unable to achieve ratification in three more states.

Disappointed but undeterred, members of the Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women (GCW) in Vermont proposed a state constitutional amendment with similar wording. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the state had lagged behind many others on women’s rights, but by 1982 the political environment appeared far more favorable.<sup>2</sup> Bipartisan support for the ERA remained strong, Kunin was running for governor, and the percentage of women in the legislature had risen significantly. But in the end, voters rejected the state ERA by a narrow margin in 1986. Kunin, who had become governor in 1984, won re-election that year but lost the ERA.

How could this have happened? It belied the commonly held belief that Vermonters were exceptional champions of liberty and equality as Kunin had noted in her opening legislative address. They had estab-

lished a republic of freemen during the Revolutionary period, outlawed slavery, touted abolitionism, and repeatedly maintained independent positions on key national issues. Given this legacy and the strength of the state's Democratic Party, national leaders had predicted that if the ERA failed to pass in Vermont, it could not be achieved anywhere. Yet by 1986, when conservative social policy was ascendant, were Vermonters so exceptional? A year earlier Phyllis Schlafly, chief opponent of the federal ERA, assumed otherwise, stating, "I find it difficult to believe that Vermont could be so different from the rest of the country."<sup>3</sup> Even so activists blamed outsiders for the outcome, either Schlafly on the one side or the National Organization for Women (NOW) on the other, along with the money each side brought into the campaign.

Rather than an exceptional case, Vermonters' engagement with the ERA involved a complex interplay between national and state political and social developments. National organizers undoubtedly helped fuel the debate with political rhetoric and money, but the foundations of a grassroots anti-feminist movement emerged in Vermont at just the right time to challenge the state ERA. Local opposition to the federal ERA had grown incrementally in the late 1970s and early 1980s when social conservatives, Catholics, and evangelical Christians in Vermont began organizing to oppose abortion and counter feminism. As the state ERA campaign gained momentum, it became the main target for mobilizing these groups into a loose coalition. Touting traditional family values, they galvanized conservative women into political action and raised fears about the ERA's long-term impact on the daily lives of women and men.

#### VERMONTERS AND THE FEDERAL ERA

The battle over the federal ERA set the stage for the Vermont contest and continued to haunt proponents throughout the state campaign. As ratification of the federal amendment proceeded in legislative halls across the country, women on both sides of the issue disputed how to accommodate gender differences within a framework of equal citizenship rights. Were women ready to adopt all the responsibilities men shouldered, or in some areas were they better off remaining under the umbrella of male protection because of their differences from men and their gender-based contributions to society?<sup>4</sup> These questions had arisen in the nineteenth century during campaigns for woman suffrage, and they continued to bedevil feminists into the Civil Rights Era. As advocates struggled to explain the necessity of the ERA and its tangible benefits, opponents envisioned mothers and daughters forced into the workplace, military combat, and unisex bathrooms. Moreover, the

amendment quickly collided with *Roe v. Wade* and the rise of anti-abortion activists who portrayed the ERA as a license for abortion on demand underwritten with federal dollars.<sup>5</sup> These fears would not have eroded support for the amendment without the leadership of Republican activist Phyllis Schlafly, who organized STOP ERA (Stop Taking away Our Privileges), a network of white conservative Christian women determined to preserve women's traditional roles. She helped shift the Republican Party rightward, creating a clear partisan divide on the ERA. But how did Schlafly's movement affect the ERA campaign in Vermont?<sup>6</sup>

Partisanship did not doom either the federal or state ERA amendments in Vermont, where leaders of both parties continued to support the issue through 1986. During the 1970s and 1980s, a multi-party system was developing in the state as Democrats increasingly eroded the century-long dominance of the Republican Party. The election of Democrat Phil Hoff in 1962 signaled the shift, coupled with an influx of newcomers, who not only increased the population by 31 percent, but also brought social change to Vermont's traditional rural culture and politics.<sup>7</sup> While the political dynamics in the state reflected the rise of Democratic constituencies, the political rhetoric, leadership, and organizational dynamics of the federal ERA movement influenced Vermonters throughout the period.

Established in 1964 by Governor Hoff, the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women (GCW) became the institutional face of the ERA movement in Vermont. As chair of the GCW, sociologist Lenore McNeer was instrumental in leading the effort to ratify the federal ERA as an essential tool for achieving women's economic and educational equality. In addition to a graduate degree from the University of Chicago, McNeer possessed both practical experience as a mental health worker and administrative expertise as the director of Human Services at Vermont College in Montpelier. She led the GCW in efforts to eliminate gender-based job discrimination by reforming Vermont's Fair Employment Practices Act, to prohibit schools from restricting or expelling pregnant students, and most controversially, to decriminalize abortion. Endorsement of the latter reform put the GCW and the outspoken McNeer at odds with conservatives in the legislature, where the issue languished for two years before the Vermont Supreme Court effectively legalized abortion in late January 1972.<sup>8</sup> The timing of the decision clearly linked women's access to abortion with debate over the federal ERA.

When Congress passed the ERA two months later, the GCW, in collaboration with the nonpartisan Vermont Women's Political Caucus (VWPC), swung into action to lobby the legislature for ratification. Un-

der the leadership of Caryl Stewart, Sister Elizabeth Candon, and Esther Sorrell, all of Burlington, and other politically active women, the VWPC sought to elect women to political office and to pass the ERA. A handful of states ratified the federal amendment immediately, but the Vermont Legislature delayed action by sending it to a joint summer study committee to analyze its effects on Vermont statutes. McNeer and Stewart spearheaded the effort to lobby legislators and supply witnesses for hearings while they sought support from a coalition of twenty-five statewide organizations and women's groups, including the League of Women Voters, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Vermont Public Interest Research Group, and Common Cause. Meanwhile, Republican Louise Swainbank of St. Johnsbury, one of nineteen women in the house of representatives, led the legislative effort.<sup>9</sup>

Despite widespread support for the ERA among political and administrative leaders in the state, Lenore McNeer recognized that the ratification process could easily become derailed if it dragged on too long. Moreover, it was an election year, and legislators needed to be educated about the issue. While representatives were electioneering, the coalition recruited speakers, organized educational meetings, and polled legislators to ensure that both parties would endorse ratification. With the election of Governor Thomas Salmon in November, a new contingent of Democratic women in the legislature, and support from Anne Armstrong, special assistant to President Richard M. Nixon, passage seemed assured. Indeed, women in the house of representatives were so confi-



*Karen Kent, ERA Project Manager, Lenore McNeer, chair, Governor's Commission on Women, Gov. Thomas P. Salmon, Rep. Louise Swainbank, and Sen. Dorothy Shea review the federal ERA ratification bill in 1973. Courtesy Vermont Commission on Women.*

dent of ratification that they decided to refrain from “over-talking” the issue, according to Swainbank.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile an undercurrent of discontent about women’s rights began to emerge in other states. News that a number of states, including Oklahoma, Illinois, Ohio, Nevada, and Louisiana, had rejected the ERA bolstered opponents. Recognizing a propitious moment, Phyllis Schlafly used her recently organized STOP ERA to reach out to women in the remaining states through the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*; she would turn her attention to Vermont in the future. Thanks to McNeer and her lobbying effort, the Vermont House of Representatives quickly passed the ratification resolution, but Senator Robert Bloomer from Rutland sought further delay through judiciary hearings and a public referendum on the issue.<sup>11</sup>

Adversaries had begun submitting petitions against the ERA and appeared for the first time at public hearings. About 250 people flocked to the statehouse on January 25, 1973, marking the onset of public debate among women. About a third, mostly from the Northeast Kingdom, opposed the amendment. Taking their cue from the nationwide debate, they argued that it was a Communist plot to deny women the privileges of being a wife and mother; it was against “God’s laws,” they claimed, would “hand the care of children to the federal government,” and would send women into combat to be captured and raped.<sup>12</sup> Dismissive of their concerns, proponents argued that the ERA was a matter of justice and fairness in keeping with the state’s heritage of “progressive legislation.” They were determined to present themselves as informed, polite, and conservative “middle-class women” to distance themselves from the radical “women’s lib image.” In the end, negative press coverage of Bloomer’s tactics and the lack of organized opposition propelled senators to reject the referendum, 19-9, and to approve ratification, 19-8. Opponents came largely from Orleans, Essex, Caledonia, Lamoille, and Rutland counties, with the exception of leading Republican Madeleine Harwood of Manchester. One of three female senators, Harwood voiced her opposition loudly, much to the dismay of the editor of the *Bennington Banner*. Claiming that the Fourteenth Amendment and recent non-discriminatory legislation was adequate to guarantee equality in the workplace, she echoed Schlafly’s reasoning that the measure would invalidate the protections wives and mothers enjoyed and impose an unnecessary federal mandate on the states.<sup>13</sup>

While opponents raised fears about the impact of the ERA on women’s lives and social policy, Lenore McNeer relished her victory as a significant achievement that had pre-empted meaningful opposition in Vermont. Nationally, ten more states were needed in the next six years

to complete ratification, yet that goal would prove elusive. Legislators in Nebraska and Idaho debated whether to rescind previous votes, and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on January 22, 1973, in the case of *Roe v. Wade* had begun to ignite a groundswell of opposition. Women and men opposed to the ERA faced a new level of anxiety about the future. Mrs. John R. Collier of Berlin summed it up in a letter to the *Burlington Free Press*: "Does anyone care what is happening?" she queried. "Right before our eyes, just in the last few weeks, do you realize how many strange decisions have taken place?" A "wife can sue her husband" after a car accident; "abortions are legal"; the "180-day residency" requirement for voting is unconstitutional; and the Vermont Senate ratified the ERA. Astonished at those who voted to undermine the "laws that protect the woman and give her dignity as a wife and mother," she probed further: "what force is behind the feminist women liberators, the Vermont Legal Aid attorneys, the Liberty Union Party, and the American Civil Liberty Union?" The specter of left-wing radicalism led her to believe that Americans would soon be hoisting the "Communist Red Flag" themselves.<sup>14</sup>

During the next two years, as the Watergate break-in and Nixon's duplicity caused many Americans to question the integrity of government, final ratification of the ERA began to lose momentum. Although six more states ratified the amendment in the next three years, several either rejected, rescinded, or deliberated over previous ratification votes. Ominously, New York had ratified the ERA quickly in 1972, but in 1975 the assembly considered rescission and voters rejected a state ERA after rural women organized an effective opposition.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, a campaign to rescind Vermont's ratification had also emerged in fall 1975 among women who feared the ERA would degrade their lifestyles. Women from Morrisville formed the Vermont Caucus on the Family (VCF), an organization designed to combat many of the social changes that appeared to be undermining traditional family life. Under the leadership of Darlene Perkins, a young, articulate housewife, VCF gathered about fifty members from local women's groups to defend "the right and role of woman to choose to pursue the time-honored occupation of wife and mother, . . . the most important job in our society."<sup>16</sup> Echoing their anti-suffrage forebears who championed female difference, they claimed the ERA would invalidate husbands' obligation to support families, require wives to work for wages, and either reduce their spousal benefits, or increase Social Security taxes on their husbands' earnings. Moreover, it would destroy the sanctity of marriage by legalizing homosexual marriages and adoption. Coupling these concerns about marriage with conservative resistance to federal control



over state affairs, they asserted parents' rights to raise their children without the interference of government bureaucrats. The ERA was a "federal grab for power," Perkins asserted; it would drag children into publicly funded daycare and women into combat; it would eliminate single-sex schools and organizations; it would result in higher life and auto insurance premiums for women; and it would give women "a 'constitutional' right to abortion on demand" without state regulation. Many of these claims were highly speculative at best, but Perkins lent credence to the opposition movement by using rational arguments to assure working women that the Equal Employment Opportunity Act and Equal Credit Act were enough to secure gender equity.<sup>17</sup>



*Phyllis Schlafly selling bread to legislators to raise money for STOP ERA, Springfield, Ill., 1980. Courtesy Dorothea Jacobson-Wenzel, photographer, and Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.*

A disciple of Phyllis Schlafly, Perkins had been inspired by the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, which provided a blueprint for conservative women's activism nationwide. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in a Catholic family, Schlafly had raised six children while she engaged in Republican Party politics, often challenging the liberal-leaning establishment with conservative, anti-Communist principles. Schlafly's newsletter tapped into rising discontent over the dramatic changes in American society affecting the family and helped disseminate her ideas to neighborhood and religious groups nationwide who joined STOP ERA. Renamed the Eagle Forum in 1975, the organization aimed to rescind the ERA in vulnerable states and block its passage in at least four more.<sup>18</sup>

Under Perkins's leadership, VCF developed a two-pronged strategy to repeal Vermont's ratification of the amendment. She organized a legislative petition campaign demanding rescission, and the caucus initiated a lawsuit against the GCW, claiming that its advocacy of the ERA was partisan and a misuse of taxpayer funds. Schlafly's organization had developed this tactic to undermine feminist activism, and several state legislatures were considering bills to prohibit women's commissions from lobbying or to abolish them altogether. As part of the executive branch



of government, the GCW responded that the ERA was considered a nonpartisan issue. Meanwhile Senators Fred Westphal of Lamoille and Melvin Mandigo of Essex County prepared a bill to rescind Vermont's ratification of the ERA.<sup>19</sup>

During the 1976 legislative session, Vermonters heard another round in the debate over women's role in society, which mirrored the ongoing national dialogue. Noting that the ERA applied only to public not private organizations, members of the GCW insisted that it would not dictate household decisions or changes in family roles; nor would it validate homosexuality, abortion, or unisex bathrooms. They considered organizing a group of "Homemakers for ERA" to link it to "motherhood and apple pie." The ERA was not an attack on the rights of homemakers, they asserted; instead, housewives' labor would be recognized in family law, women's Social Security benefits would rise, and their access to credit programs would improve. In addition to state and legal experts, they recruited ministers, housewives, fathers, small businessmen, farmers, and Vermont's "Mother of the Year" to contradict the perception that only middle-class professional women favored the measure. At a public forum in Montpelier, Perkins aired her concern that the ERA would deprive women of their privileges as wives and mothers while Representative Madeleine Kunin insisted that it was not a question of "wiping out privileges" but of "equalizing them." Moreover, she believed Vermont could not revoke its ratification; only Congress held that power. In letters to the press, opponents characterized members of the "Feminist Movement" as man-haters who favored abortion over children and depicted "the home [as] a prison for women." Others blamed legislators for suppressing the "voice of the people."<sup>20</sup>

At the state house Senator Robert Bloomer convened a senate hearing that lasted until midnight. This time "mobs of men and women wearing pro-ERA and anti-ERA buttons" crowded into the hall, some with babies, to support both sides of the issue. They heard familiar arguments in favor of the ERA from a long list of speakers, including legal experts, Governor Salmon, Vermont's congressional delegation, and other state officials. In opposition Senator Madeleine Harwood reiterated her concerns, and in a surprise move, members of VCF ushered Phyllis Schlafly into the hall, supplanting their own testimony with her "expert" opinion. Dressed all in pink with a bouffant hairdo, Schlafly posed as a lowly housewife. The ERA was not about equal pay, she explained, but it would allow "Congress and the military to treat women exactly like men, and you can hardly call that an advance," she asserted. As an outsider with national funds, she garnered little public approval from the largely pro-ERA audience in Montpelier.<sup>21</sup>

Nor did the Vermont Legislature appreciate such blatant outside influence. Senators voted, 17-11, against rescission and dismissed the notion of a public referendum; a rescission bill died in the house along with an effort to defund the GCW. Perkins expressed her dismay at the process she deemed undemocratic, but vowed that the “truth cannot be suppressed” even though “the ERA bureaucrats and their allies [have] ... all of our tax money at their disposal.” A month later, the court dismissed VCF’s lawsuit, ruling that the GCW’s activities were within the scope of the governor’s discretionary powers.<sup>22</sup>

If opponents of the ERA complained that feminists had thoroughly infiltrated the government, members of the GCW were heartened by their victory and their growing political influence. Having defeated rescission, they quickly turned their attention to Vermont’s first Women’s Town Meeting, which featured the ERA among many other women’s issues. Organized under the leadership of Lenore McNeer and held in February 1977 at Vermont College in Montpelier, it was the first in a series of women’s meetings convened in each state as part of International Women’s Year (IWY). In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford had created a National Commission on the Observance of Women’s Year to promote gender equality, and subsequently Congress appropriated \$5 million to fund state-level meetings as a prelude to a National Women’s Conference to be held in Houston in November 1977. For opponents of the ERA, such support was evidence that government leaders had adopted the feminist agenda.<sup>23</sup>

Over a thousand women with myriad interests attended the Vermont Women’s Town Meeting, including a small contingent of anti-abortion activists opposed to feminism. Workshops and discussion led to debates over a wide range of topics, from equal pay, divorce law, childcare, and old-age poverty, to women in the media, alternative lifestyles, and the isolating effects of homemaking. About twenty women representing the Vermont Right to Life Committee (VRLC), which had organized in 1974, presented resolutions challenging feminists on the ERA and reproductive rights. Their spokesperson Nellie Gray, the national leader of “March for Life” in Washington, also expressed her disdain for this misuse of federal power, insisting that their “tax dollars” were being used “for a very biased point of view.” Ultimately, the Vermont committee submitted a wide-ranging feminist platform to the national commission, from support for the ERA to reproductive freedom and lesbian rights. Shocked at Vermont’s radicalism, Nellie Gray returned to Washington to help recruit conservative women to attend their state conventions and serve as delegates to the Houston conference.<sup>24</sup>

Delegates from Vermont who traveled to Houston witnessed a major



*Vermont delegates to the National Women's Conference in Houston, November 1977. Mary Just Skinner, Pam Greene, Anne Sarcka, Rita Edwards, Rep. Madeleine Kunin, Phoebe Morse, and Judy Rosenstreich. Photo taken in 1984, courtesy Vermont Historical Society.*

turning point for the women's movement and for the fate of the ERA. Despite challenges from conservatives, national leaders forged an historic consensus on women's issues including lesbian rights, but at the same time anti-feminists held an alternative meeting with Phyllis Schlafly as the star attraction. Schlafly's success at motivating right-wing women, claiming the pro-family mantra, and gaining equal media attention boosted the STOP ERA campaign. Clearly, a growing number of conservative women were eager to reclaim traditional womanhood as their own. Moreover, opposition to IWY solidified an alliance between opponents



*Members of VTNOW marching in Washington, D.C. in July 1978 to urge Congress to extend the deadline for ratifying the federal ERA beyond 1978. From the right, Tina Calabro of Bennington, Paige Bailey of Plainfield, and 4th from the right, Patty Dooley of Springfield. Courtesy Vermont State Archives and Records Administration.*

of the ERA and anti-abortion organizations, which coalesced existing networks of Catholics, evangelicals, and Mormons into a unified movement pitted against the ERA. During the ensuing five years, they helped defeat the federal amendment in five states, and also gained significant leverage within the Republican Party as it adopted a broader pro-family agenda in conjunction with other New Right leaders. The election of

Ronald Reagan and removal of the ERA from the Republican Party Platform in 1980 signaled the end of nonpartisanship on the issue at the national level, and the amendment expired in June 1982.<sup>25</sup>

#### AN ERA FOR VERMONT

Convinced that Vermont did not mirror the nation and that its liberal tradition of equal rights would surely outweigh this rising tide of anti-feminism, the GCW embarked on an ambitious campaign to amend the Vermont Constitution. The process would involve approval from two successive legislative bodies (1983 and 1985) followed by a public referendum in November 1986. Both political parties in Vermont still supported the ERA, and Democrats had gained greater legislative and administrative leadership in the state. Over the previous ten years the percentage of women in the legislature had risen from 11 to 19 percent.<sup>26</sup> This favorable political climate, however, did not insulate Vermont from conservative social and cultural trends or from the legacy of the federal ERA campaign, which continued to infect the state ERA effort until the final vote.

As Vermonters rephrased the national debate on women's equality, Republican support remained an important feature of the ERA movement. Since 1977, Anne Sarcka, the executive director of the GCW, had collaborated effectively with Republican Governor Richard Snelling and his wife Barbara on women's issues such as equal pay, reform of divorce laws, and domestic violence. Snelling favored women's equality, but according to Sarcka, he also needed plenty of encouragement from mainstream feminists. To assuage his prickly feelings about NOW and more radical groups, Sarcka recalled that she hoped "to be a rose in his lapel."<sup>27</sup> He appointed Republican women supportive of equal rights legislation to the GCW and remained strongly committed to the federal ERA, all of which conveniently boosted his successful 1982 re-election campaign against female challenger Madeleine Kunin. Indeed, his encouragement was instrumental in the GCW's decision to introduce the state ERA amendment in the 1983 legislative session, even though NOW and the National Women's Political Caucus feared such state efforts would siphon energy away from rejuvenating the federal campaign.<sup>28</sup>

Sarcka and members of the GCW worked closely with statewide women's organizations and leaders of both parties in 1983 to gain legislative approval for the state ERA amendment. In the interest of simplicity, they agreed to exclude other complicating sources of identity, such as race, religion, and national origin, and to retain the word "sex" rather than replace it with the more contemporary feminist term "gen-



*Anne Sarcka, executive director, Gloria Gil, chair, Governor's Commission on Women, Gov. Richard A. Snelling, and Helena Ure, commissioner, c. 1978. Courtesy Vermont Commission on Women.*

der” designating feminine identity. While the wording choice appeared politic at the time, the retention of “sex” would later come back to haunt the campaign as it allowed opponents to argue that biological sex also meant sexual preference. To promote the amendment, the GCW organized a Vermont ERA Campaign steering committee comprised of representatives from mainstream women’s organizations, such as the League of Women Voters (LWV), Vermont Business and Professional Women (BPW), the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Vermont Women’s Political Caucus (VWPC), and the Vermont Federation of Republican Women (VFRW). Collaboration between Republican and Democratic women was particularly helpful in maintaining the nonpartisan nature of the campaign as the legislature debated the issue.<sup>29</sup>

These allies dominated public hearings in both the senate and the house. In an unusual appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Governor Snelling linked the amendment to Vermonters’ heritage of freedom and equality; it was not a woman’s issue but “a people’s issue,” he insisted; it would affirm that Vermont was “a certain kind of place” where all citizens would have the opportunity to prosper. Representatives from GCW argued that seventeen other states had adopted similar ERAs, mostly in the early 1970s, without significant unintended consequences; the amendment would also create a constitutional mandate requiring Vermont legislators, agencies, and boards to ensure sex equity in the public sector and to continue revising outdated laws and policies. Moreover, it would give Vermonters access to state courts to

challenge sex discrimination with stricter scrutiny than that applied to sex as a category under the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>30</sup>

Their testimony overshadowed that of opponents, who had not yet fully organized. Most agreed with Reverend James Gangwer of Calvary Baptist Church in Essex Junction that the ERA would open “a Pandora’s Box in the courtrooms of this state” and destroy the family unit. Members of the Vermont Right to Life Committee (VRLC) claimed that the ERA would lead to taxpayer-funded abortions. Several women believed the ERA threatened their lifestyles. Echoing opposition to the federal amendment, Barbara Corwin of South Royalton felt she had all the rights she needed and did not want to assume male responsibilities. “I do not wish to go into combat, I don’t want my grand children to go in combat, I don’t like the thought that I might be called upon to pay alimony to my husband.” Keith Dunham of St. Albans, who had traveled around Franklin County for his work and listened to rural Vermonters, warned legislators that they should “talk to the people back home” because there was a silent majority out there who opposed the ERA.<sup>31</sup> Even so, legislators easily adopted the measure with wide margins in the senate (21-2) and the house (134-11).

Two years later, as social conservatives became more organized and politically influential, Vermont lawmakers were less sanguine about passage despite the rise of prominent women within state government. Madeleine Kunin had been elected governor in 1984, and women held a quarter of legislative seats, chairing Judiciary Committees in both bodies. At GCW, civil rights activist Lynn Heglund had replaced Anne Sarcka as executive director. Originally from the Midwest, Heglund had led the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union from 1976-79 and served as a civil rights specialist for the Vermont Attorney General’s office.<sup>32</sup> Politically astute, Heglund would become the ERA’s most ardent and vocal supporter and the most attuned to the pitfalls of complacency in an era when feminism was losing ground.

By 1985 the rise of social conservatism within the national Republican Party had plunged feminists into disarray. Divided over whether to pursue direct action or electoral politics, NOW leaders split ranks over whether to renew their fight for the ERA. The anti-abortion movement had also gained momentum and claimed many new followers since the airing of Bernard Nathanson’s graphic film, *The Silent Scream* (1984), depicting an abortion and suffering fetus through ultrasound. In Vermont members of the VRLC had become more active in developing pregnancy crisis centers and had gained some support for legislation requiring parental notification for a minor seeking an abortion.<sup>33</sup> Most alarming for Heglund was the failure of a state ERA campaign in



Maine, where over 60 percent of voters rejected the amendment in November 1984. Indeed, similar efforts had previously failed in Wisconsin, New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Iowa. A nonpartisan analysis in mid-1985 concluded that, “ERA opponents presently have the upper hand.” They had sown enough doubt regarding social and moral issues to deter voters from disrupting the status quo.<sup>34</sup>

As a result, Heglund scrutinized the Maine campaign closely and called on the ERA Campaign Steering Committee to develop a clear strategy to achieve final legislative and voter approval. Betty Nuovo, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, and Mary Just Skinner, who held the same position in the senate, sought to structure public hearings carefully and ensure that the intent of the amendment was clearly defined in the legislative record. They knew that opponents had begun to mobilize but were unable to pinpoint a politically active group in Vermont. Believing that reason and common sense would prevail, they were confounded by the array of misinformed and seemingly outrageous claims, including abortion-on-demand, rampant homosexuality, unisex bathrooms, and even bestiality that had emerged during the Maine campaign.<sup>35</sup> At senate hearings in January local opponents appeared in equal numbers to testify against advocates for the amendment, making their voices heard in record numbers. None identified themselves with organizations, but their testimony reflected many of the arguments Phyllis Schlafly had popularized through STOP ERA.

Testimony from Anne Moore and Michelle Morin, both from Elmore, exemplified the personal experiences that had politicized women on both sides of the issue. To explain how she had suffered discrimination because of her gender, Moore described how police had “snickered” at her after she was raped; when she became pregnant as a result, she was told to either go to Mexico or appear before a “board of male physicians” to determine if she was “mentally incompetent.” While working and raising five children, her husband had demeaned her for inadequate housekeeping, and prospective employers discriminated against her in job interviews even after she had graduated from law school. She insisted that women should no longer be silent about the judicial system men controlled.

Morin, on the other hand, was primarily concerned about “mandatory state funding of abortions” and preserving the rights of health care professionals opposed to abortion. As a teenager she had reluctantly “surrendered” two babies for adoption and was now dedicated to improving adoption practices for other “women who experience untimely pregnancies.” Convinced that the ERA would result in “legal unisex marriages” and equal rights for same-sex parents during the adoption



process, Morin feared that birth mothers would no longer be assured that heterosexual couples would raise their babies.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, concerns about abortion, either that the ERA would prohibit any restrictions on access or that it would mandate state funding, were uppermost in the minds of many opponents. Their testimony against the ERA had begun to capture more attention from the press. Both sides began placing ads in major newspapers and letters to the editor proliferated, raising the level of public discourse about an issue that few Vermonters had previously questioned. Even as opponents were becoming more vocal and gaining the support of national conservative organizations, the senate approved the measure by a three-to-one margin.

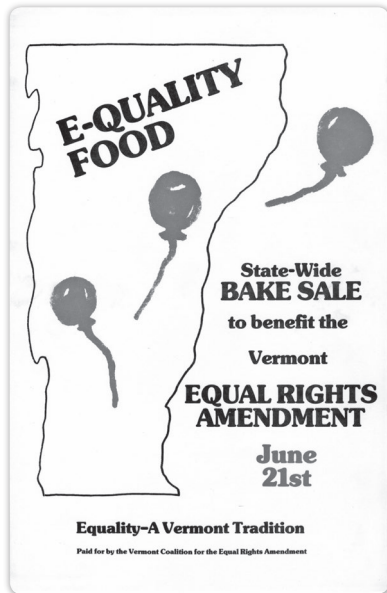
Meanwhile, Betty Nuovo faced the prospect of a fierce debate at hearings in the house. Supporters wearing green stickers in favor of the ERA and opponents with red "STOP ERA" stickers packed the house chamber with 250 people in late February 1985. Clearly the opposition had begun to organize and to sharpen their arguments. Reverend Gangwer testified as the local representative of the Moral Majority, which he claimed had 1,000 members in the state. Reiterating fears about abortion and religious liberties, he expressed outrage at the way the proposal had been "railroaded through the senate." Bill St. Armour of Colchester, chairman of the Vermont Eagle Forum with 150 local members, asserted that the ERA was a "legal tool to further the cause of gay rights," and Peter Chagnon of Vermont STOP ERA voiced Schlafly's opposing arguments. Bonnie Klimowski, who represented 234 members of the North Avenue Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Burlington, proclaimed her appreciation of the need for "equal pay for equal work," but she asked, "How can we be sure that the word sex in the ERA will not be construed by the courts to mean sexual preference?" Would her church be "forced to employ homosexuals as teachers" or "ordain women as pastors?" Others expressed fears of family breakdown resulting from radical feminism hiding under the cloak of the ERA. An equal number of ERA proponents disclaimed these fears, described experiences of sex discrimination, focused on economic issues, and insisted that the ERA was "a simple straight forward statement with no hidden meanings" supported by a majority of Vermonters. As Lynn Heglund noted, she represented 30 organizations with a constituency of 20,000 women and men throughout the state.<sup>37</sup> In the end, the lively debate had little impact on representatives, 83 percent of whom voted to approve the amendment.

## THE ERA POLITICIZES VERMONT WOMEN

Once legislative approval had been secured, the state ERA galvanized women on both sides of the issue into political action in preparation for the constitutionally required 1986 referendum. Polls indicated that 71 percent of Vermonters, including two-thirds of men, favored the ERA along with the political establishment, which included Governor Kunin, her two gubernatorial opponents, Peter Smith and Bernie Sanders, and congressional candidates from both parties.<sup>38</sup> Advocates were still confident of success, yet Heglund worried constantly about the specter of outside organizations flooding the state with misinformation and money (over \$215,000) to fuel the kind of negative political advertising that had doomed the state ERA campaign in Maine by a two-to-one margin. She repeatedly consulted with lawyers and the attorney general in order to refine her talking points and counter the opposition.<sup>39</sup>

To mobilize voters with a unified media message, raise funds, and separate the GCW from the campaign, Heglund helped create the Vermont Coalition for the ERA (VCERA), an alliance of ERA supporters. Marge Gaskins of the LWV became chair, and Beth Fouhy, a young Democratic political operative from Washington, D.C., was hired as executive director. With experience in voter mobilization and fundraising, Fouhy was recruited at the recommendation of Governor Kunin, who

knew her father, a Washington journalist. Fouhy sought to keep the coalition focused and operating efficiently while raising over \$200,000 to match the opposition.<sup>40</sup> This centralized committee structure expanded the earlier steering committee to fifty-two organizations, which included actively engaged groups, such as LWV, BPW, NOW, ACLU, Common Cause, and the



*Flyer distributed by the Vermont Coalition for the ERA to promote local bake sales as part of its fundraising campaign in June 1986. Courtesy Vermont Historical Society.*

Women's Division of the Vermont Bar Association, along with less-involved groups, such as the Vermont Girl Scout Council, Episcopal Diocese, and Children's Forum. Using recommendations from a strategic poll, VCERA's executive board adopted policy positions and a unified strategy; it organized county coordinators to sponsor programs and fundraisers throughout the state, and pooled political contributions to cover general expenses and advertising. During the summer of 1986, county committees raised awareness and participation among women by sponsoring speakers and debates, circulating leaflets, posters, and t-shirts at fairs, marching in parades, holding local fundraisers, and even promoting a statewide bake sale despite objections from avid feminists who complained about perpetuating gender stereotypes.

Yet these pro-ERA efforts proved to be unwieldy and inconsistent across the state. Some county coordinators lacked organizational expertise; others simply could not find reliable volunteers to sponsor neighborhood meetings and canvassing. Likewise, Men for the ERA, a group of key civic leaders and sponsors from both parties, including Richard Snelling, Peter Smith, Rep. Jim Jeffords, John Easton, Bernie Sanders, and Senator Patrick Leahy, garnered little support. Using the motto, "A quality man is not threatened by a woman of equality," Executive Director Jack Hughes of Jeffersonville spoke earnestly to local civic groups hoping to raise funds, but by early fall he appeared to have exhausted his energies and was eventually dismissed. In late September, Heglund became disheartened after speaking in Newport, Wells River, Ryegate, and White River Junction. In a monthly memo to Kunin



*Lynn Heglund, executive director, Governor's Commission on Women, speaking to a local chapter of Rotary International in 1986. Courtesy Vermont Commission on Women.*

she bemoaned, "the average Vermonter is almost completely unaware of the existence of the referendum" and "easy prey" to the campaign of misinformation from opponents that was becoming increasingly effective.<sup>41</sup>

Plagued by inconsistent volunteering and the persistent quest for funds, VCERA's unwieldy outreach efforts proved challenging, but

perhaps not as problematic as the internal dissension among the organization's diverse leaders who disagreed about campaign strategy. For the most part, moderate feminists, including elected and appointed officials and members of mainstream women's organizations such as the BPW, VWPC, and LWV, found themselves at odds with radicals who were willing to challenge patriarchy from outside the political system. In order to distance themselves from media-inspired fears about feminist revolutionaries, Heglund and other moderates focused on the ERA as a constitutional guarantee of existing rights that reflected Vermonters' lengthy tradition; it would provide equal access to public education, training, and workplaces, ensuring the health of Vermont families and protecting children. To avoid confusion, they spoke about "Equal Rights" rather than "ERA" and explained how the measure would affect only public, not private, action, representing a "legacy of fair treatment" for Vermont's children.<sup>42</sup> To counter opponents' claims about a hidden radical agenda, moderate feminists denied that there was any connection between the ERA and abortion or lesbian rights. But this omission upset members of Vermont NOW, the Burlington's Women's Council, and other feminists. Heather Wishik, a graduate of Vermont law school and advocate for lesbian rights, warned the coalition that the strategy was a mistake; she insisted that the state ERA held the potential to ensure abortion rights for poor women and to validate same-sex marriage. To negate these issues was counterproductive to the feminist movement and a disservice to poor women and lesbians. The division over strategy resulted in continual complaints about VCERA's leadership, efforts to change the composition of the executive board, and rumors that political operatives in the Kunin administration and her election campaign were influencing the coalition.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, the Vermont campaign had gained increasing attention in the national media, resulting in a rhetorical confrontation between Eleanor Smeal, president of NOW, and Phyllis Schlafly that exacerbated the local controversy. After failing to achieve the federal ERA through direct action and lobbying, NOW had turned to partisan collaboration with Democrats to elect Geraldine Ferraro as vice president. When the Mondale-Ferraro ticket lost, NOW's leadership struggled to redefine its political strategy to combat the rise of anti-feminism. Smeal, a veteran of the federal ERA campaign who prioritized direct action over partisan politics, resumed the presidency and sought to reinvigorate and unify NOW by building membership through demonstrable political actions at both national and state levels. "Now is the time to go back into the streets," she proclaimed in July 1985. The Vermont

ERA campaign and the prospect of a feminist governor running for re-election provided Smeal with a perfect opportunity to test her strategy and bolster the movement against sexism. By sending a “strike force” into the state with a speakers’ program, voter education, and TV and radio advertising, she hoped to make the Vermont campaign a “model program” that could be repeated across the nation to eventually “blast the ERA out of Congress” again. To fund the effort, she sought at least \$250,000, far in excess of the \$10,000 NOW had applied to the failed campaign in Maine. She vowed to cooperate with VCERA but to avoid partisan entanglements.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, in 1985 the Vermont ERA Campaign and Kunin’s re-election became NOW’s top priority.

Even before Smeal organized her Vermont brigade, Phyllis Schlafly began exploiting her opponent’s vision to recruit her army of anti-feminists into battle. By the mid-1980s, she had convinced her troops that women’s rights meant the right “to kill unborn babies” and to reap “respect for lesbian sex and lifestyles,” despite what feminists and their collaborators in the mainstream media claimed. For years she had been portraying her movement as the underdog in a campaign against the dominant political and cultural establishment that feminists had infiltrated. To connect these hot-button issues to the ERA, she simply reprinted Smeal’s platform, which conveniently linked the Vermont ERA campaign with renewed efforts to secure lesbian rights and access to abortion. In this way, she provided ammunition for ERA opponents in Vermont, who unveiled this so-called “hidden agenda” to heighten fears among voters.<sup>45</sup>

The national confrontation over feminism not only engendered disension within VCERA, but also fueled a constant refrain in Vermont that outsiders were influencing the ERA campaign. It erupted publicly within VCERA’s leadership in February 1986, when the UVM student association invited Phyllis Schlafly to Burlington to debate Sarah Weddington, famous for her success in arguing *Roe v. Wade* before the U.S. Supreme Court. At a pre-event press conference, Beth Fouhy expressed her concerns about Schlafly’s appearance and her veracity, which led leaders of Vermont NOW, already irritated with VCERA, to object publicly. The editor of the *Burlington Free Press* concurred, claiming it was an attempt to limit free speech. Marge Gaskins of VCERA defended Fouhy but soon resigned her leadership role partly because of the rift.<sup>46</sup> Her successor, Anne Sarcka, used her considerable diplomatic skills to quell these divisions, recognizing the need for the outreach and funding that NOW could supply. Meanwhile at the debate, the Burlington Women’s Council attempted to grab press attention by

posing as “Ladies Against Women” to heckle Schlafly. Dressed in high heels, frilly skirts, hats, and white gloves, while carrying mops, brooms, and satirical signs (“My Home is his Castle”), they stood up, paraded, and performed skits as she attempted to speak. It was “great fun” according to participant Gretchen Bailey and captured the attention of both supporters and detractors, who complained about the outlandish tactics, either because they believed the stunt undermined the legitimacy of the campaign or it was evidence of a feminist conspiracy.<sup>47</sup> A month later, Smeal arrived in the state to defend NOW’s involvement and the importance of the Vermont campaign at the national level. Yet her appearances only heightened the rhetorical battle after she labeled the opponents’ tactics “fascist” and “McCarthyesque” while blaming large corporations, especially insurance companies, for underwriting the opposition and continuing to discriminate against women.<sup>48</sup>

In contrast to VCERA, opponents of the amendment collaborated sporadically, which allowed each group to develop its own organizational and rhetorical strategies to instill voters with doubts and fears about the ERA. Operating within a decentralized political movement without a unified message, activists avoided the kind of internal debates that plagued VCERA. While all proclaimed respect for women’s rights, they highlighted their own concerns, presenting a smorgasbord of specific unintended consequences of the ERA to cast doubt about the outcome of a “Yes” vote. VCERA sought to address each of these potential drawbacks by citing legal precedent and expert opinions, resulting in more exposure for opponents in the press and lively debates among those who wrote letters to major newspapers.

The ERA’s potential effects on abortion garnered the most attention. Catholic Bishop John Marshall ignited the debate by issuing a public letter stating his belief in equal rights for women but opposing the amendment on the grounds that it could threaten the “life of the unborn.” To counter his significant influence with parishioners and Catholic voluntary organizations, VCERA sought to communicate with him and to encourage Catholics willing to counter his position to speak out; and some did, expressing their belief that the ERA was a social justice issue, even in the pages of the *Vermont Catholic Tribune*.<sup>49</sup> With similar reasoning, Protestant ministers from Episcopal, Methodist, Unitarian, and Congregational churches and Vermont Women of the Church demonstrated support for the ERA in the press and at forums.

Meanwhile, coalition members were eagerly awaiting a legal decision on an abortion case pending in the Vermont Superior Court. In January 1984, the ACLU had filed a lawsuit against the state claiming that

the denial of abortion coverage for Medicaid recipients was unconstitutional. Under the Hyde Amendment states were prohibited from using federal dollars for abortions; state money could be allocated for the procedure when medically necessitated, but policymakers in Vermont had chosen not to do so. Taking their cue from Phyllis Schlafly, who circulated information about similar legal cases, opponents of the ERA often cited ACLU claims or judges' decisions from other states in which denial of abortion rights under a state ERA would constitute sex discrimination because only women can have abortions. When the Vermont case was finally decided for the plaintiff in May 1986, members of VCERA were relieved because the decision relied on Vermont's constitutional right to equal protection for poor women regardless of passage of the state ERA.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, for opponents it was enough to alert the public to the ERA's potential effects. Skepticism about its impact on reproductive rights persisted especially with members of the Vermont Right to Life Committee (VRLC). In ads and letters to the editor they continued to raise the specter of "abortion on demand," warned that doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers would be denied freedom of conscience if forced to participate in publicly funded abortions, and insisted that religious institutions would lose their tax-exempt status under the dictates of legally enforced sex equality.<sup>51</sup>

Ethel List, president of VRLC, was perhaps the most prominent opponent on abortion grounds because of her previous experience in politics. She had testified at legislative hearings in 1983 and 1985, opposing the ERA unless it included specific language excluding any right to public funding of abortion, lesbian rights, or "integrated sanitary facilities."<sup>52</sup> A fifty-year-old homemaker, List and her husband had raised six children in Underhill and in Montpelier, where they moved in 1976. She became involved in the anti-abortion movement through friends in the Catholic Church, and in the early 1980s, a priest who taught at St. Augustine's Church in Montpelier solicited her help in organizing a chapter of VRLC. An effective organizer, fundraiser, and speaker, List soon became president with an office in Montpelier. Comprised largely of Catholic and Christian fundamentalists who opposed abortion on religious grounds, VRLC included twenty-seven local chapters and 2,500 members. Their responses to feminism varied, but all agreed that the state ERA was a threat to "the unborn" and to motherhood. Those who recognized women's need to work outside the home argued that the ERA was unnecessary because federal and state legislation already ensured that women had equal access to public education and jobs. List also gleaned information and political strategies



from membership in the Eagle Forum and Phyllis Schlafly's monthly reports. Using Schlafly's legal research on cases from other states, she sharpened her critique of the Vermont ERA. With its imprecise wording, Schlafly insisted that the ERA would allow liberal state judges to upend marital relations, destroy the family, and dictate social policy whenever they perceived sex discrimination.<sup>53</sup>

While opponents operated independently, they quietly shared information and political tactics without public scrutiny. List was instrumental in connecting VRLC with other political organizations that had emerged spontaneously in opposition to the ERA. As a prominent spokesperson, List gained the attention of several Baptist pastors, including Reverends James Gangwer, Paul Weaver, and Donald Carruth, who had organized Vermont Citizens for Responsible Government (VCRG), headquartered in Essex Junction, to promote "traditional family values" and "preserve the Vermont way of life." While the ERA and abortion ignited Weaver, he also hoped to expand



*Ethel List, president Vermont Right to Life Committee. Vanguard Press, October 5-12, 1986.*

VCRG to educate Vermonters about other issues that alarmed the group: divorce, drug abuse, teenage suicide, liberal school curricula, and the potential impact of state and federal court decisions on the tax-exempt status and hiring practices of religious schools and institutions. In an effort to collaborate, he asked List to manage an office in Essex Junction, where she would also oversee the ERA Impact Project, a related political action committee targeted at the ERA. Weaver circulated an anti-abortion, anti-feminist, and anti-gay message to evangelical communities throughout the state, such as the Central Vermont Conservative Ministers Fellowships with twenty-five pastors and approximately 2,000 parishioners; he gained direct support from twenty-one churches and their members. With experience as a speaker, Weaver traveled around the state informing church groups, civic organizations, the press, and radio and TV audiences of the dire consequences of the Vermont ERA. Meanwhile, List practiced her public speaking and became both a guest and a regular caller on many conservative radio sta-

tions statewide. As the public face of the opposition, she served as “a high profile target” while other opponents quietly alerted church members and neighborhood groups to the dangers of the ERA.<sup>54</sup>

In an effort to enhance their media strategies, opponents also hosted representatives from the successful campaign in Maine. List orchestrated a joint meeting with Sandra Faucher, director of political action committees for the National and Maine Right to Life organizations. Faucher not only provided intimate knowledge of the grassroots tactics used to defeat the Maine ERA, but also hired political researchers to assist Vermonters in developing a small media campaign to produce radio and newspaper ads and supermarket flyers. Shortly thereafter, the collaboration between List and Weaver faltered; List resigned from the ERA Impact Project while insisting publicly that she and Weaver would continue to work on “the issues that we agree on, abortion and the ERA.”<sup>55</sup> Her successor, Barbara Fondry, a Republican activist and member of Weaver’s congregation, was more apt to target the ERA’s potential impact on women’s economic well-being and lifestyles; she feared it would “force women to go to work against their will” because their husbands would no longer be obligated to support them.<sup>56</sup>

This grievance, that married women would be denied the respect and privileges of white middle-class status, was also paramount for anti-feminist Nancy Stringer of Colchester, who organized the Vermont ERA Information Committee (VERAIC) in conjunction with Schlafly’s STOP ERA. Taking her playbook from previous state campaigns, Schlafly had begun raising money to oppose the Vermont campaign as soon as she read Eleanor Smeal’s initiative to revive NOW. She advised her network of evangelical Christian women to write checks directly to the Vermont organization to stop the ERA, “lest like any cancer it spreads to the rest of America.” During the election season, Schlafly also hired a speaker from Michigan to sweep the state, but local leaders of VERAIC were far more effective.<sup>57</sup> Claiming to represent 150 Vermonters, members of the group had testified at legislative hearings in 1983 and 1985, when Nancy Stringer insisted that the ERA would “do nothing for women.” A middle-aged mother of three, astute organizer, and fervid anti-feminist, Stringer reiterated Schlafly’s evidence nearly verbatim to prove that the Vermont ERA was a precursor to “federal government interference” and that Vermont’s liberal judiciary would interpret it to effect a radical restructuring of society along feminist lines. “We don’t really know what ERA means,” she explained, especially the word, “sex.” “Is it the sex that you are, or the sex that you practice?”<sup>58</sup>

**AIDS out of the Closet...E.R.A. out of the Closet**

**AIDS** (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a new disease which attacks primarily male homosexuals; it is called the "Gay Plague." Of the known cases, 72% are homosexual men, many others are intravenous drug users.

**AIDS** victims include innocent people—as a result of blood transfusions, including infants and hemophiliacs (who need frequent blood transfusions).

**AIDS** is fatal: there is no cure or treatment. AIDS has claimed 2,094 victims; 805 have died; no one has recovered. AIDS destroys the body's immune system, so the body cannot fight off deadly infections.

**THE AIDS** incubation period is 6 months to 2 years. A homosexual may be a carrier of the deadly disease while appearing to be healthy. AIDS victims are doubling every six months; thousands more will have AIDS in the next few years.

**AIDS** is transmitted through sexual contact, infected needles, blood, and other bodily secretions.

*When AIDS came out of the closet, the American public discovered the startling facts about the homosexual subculture:*

*Its massive promiscuity*, which is almost impossible for the average person to comprehend. *Newsweek* reported that homosexuals with AIDS have had an average of 1,100 sexual partners. The CBS documentary called "Gay Power, Gay Politics" reported that the average homosexual has had 500 partners, and that 30 percent have had 1,000 partners.

*Its very high disease rate*. Homosexuality is dangerous to their health—and to yours, too. In addition to AIDS, homosexuals have a high rate of Hepatitis, a variety of diseases of the bowels, and all venereal diseases.

*Will E.R.A. give the homosexuals a constitutional weapon to impose their anti-family lifestyle on our society?*

**THE E.R.A.**—"gay rights" connection came out of the closet in 1983. It happened in Wisconsin where homosexuals thought they could "come out" because in 1982 Wisconsin became the only state that has passed a statewide "gay rights" law.

Some reasonable women's groups tried to put a State E.R.A. into the Wisconsin Constitution—using the same language as the Federal E.R.A., except that it contained an additional clause forbidding the use of the Wisconsin E.R.A. for "sexual preference." When the Legislature held a hearing, a most amazing thing happened.

The Wisconsin Civil Liberties Union testified against the Wisconsin E.R.A. "unless the anti-civil libertarian language is removed." By "anti-civil libertarian language" they meant the specific language that would prevent the Wisconsin E.R.A. from being used for "gay rights" and "abortion funding." The National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) also testified against the Wisconsin E.R.A. because of the additional clause.

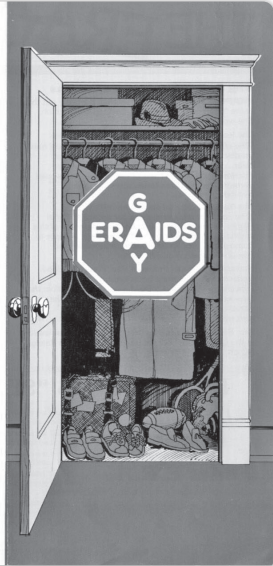
This proves that the leading pro-E.R.A. organizations admit the E.R.A.—"gay rights" connection. They want E.R.A. because of the "gay rights" and "abortion-funding" connections.

**Don't let E.R.A. put "gay rights" into the U.S. Constitution!**

**The burden of proof** is on the E.R.A. advocates to prove that E.R.A. will not tack "gay rights" into the U.S. Constitution—and this burden of proof is impossible to meet unless specific language is added to the text of E.R.A. which would prohibit that result.

**Tell your Senators and Congressman** that a clause absolutely must be added to prevent E.R.A. from being used or construed by Congress or the Federal Courts to include "gay rights" within the meaning of "sex."

Prepared by Eagle Forum • Alton, Illinois 62002



*Flyer produced by Eagle Forum and distributed in Vermont by the Vermont E.R.A. Information Committee in 1986. Courtesy Vermont Historical Society.*



*Phyllis Schlafly bringing campaign slogans from STOP ERA to Vermont. Times Argus, November 6, 1986. Courtesy Tim Newcomb.*

This potential outcome, leading to the charge that the ERA would give license to lesbian lifestyles, gay marriage, and AIDS based on sexual practices, was second only to abortion in the litany of fears opponents offered. Although she rarely appeared as a spokesperson, Stringer funneled money effectively from Schlafly's organization into the state to organize local conservative groups during the final months of the campaign. She produced videos for neighborhood gatherings, scripts for radio ads, posters, and "Shoppers' Guide" flyers for newspapers using prototypes from the STOP ERA movement. Her fundraising letter and brochure reiterated Schlafly's claims that non-discrimination "on account of sex" included sexuality and sexually transmitted disease; the ERA would not only allow homosexuals to marry and adopt children, but also compromise public health measures designed to protect the public against AIDS carriers and blood banks from contamination with the AIDS virus. Amplifying contemporary fears about the spread of AIDS, Stringer questioned whether it would become a "constitutionally protected disease" and prevent Vermont officials from shutting down "homosexual bath houses" where, she contended, promiscuity was rampant.<sup>59</sup> Members of VCERA found these claims absurd, but having chosen to retain the word "sex" rather than replace it with "gender," they could only resort to clarifying its meaning and denying that it embodied a hidden agenda while their opponents converted "sex" into a weapon to sabotage the ERA campaign.

Representatives of another anti-feminist association mobilized Vermonters with a similar ideology and brought additional dollars to the southern part of the state. Beverley LeHaye, the born-again Christian leader of Concerned Women of America (CWA), cited the defeat of Vermont's ERA as one of her top priorities in 1986. She and her husband Tim LeHaye were already well-known among Christian conservatives in 1979 when she founded CWA. Practicing a mix of religious evangelism and psychology, the couple had organized family life seminars around the country and published several popular books advising married women how to retain their femininity and raise God-loving children in the midst of cultural upheaval. To build CWA, Beverley LeHaye gathered evangelical Christian women in local prayer meetings, where she taught them to rise up against feminism and bring religion into politics by enlisting in her army of "kitchen-table lobbyists." Membership in the organization had risen to at least 150,000 by 1986 (though LeHaye claimed a half million converts), and it formed a core piece of the Christian Right Movement.<sup>60</sup> Like Schlafly, LeHaye condemned the radicals of NOW and cited Smeal's agenda in her fundrais-

ing appeals to CWA members, urging them to send “emergency” contributions to preempt the onset of “abortion on demand” and “recognition of gay and lesbian lifestyles.” She planned to sweep Vermont with personal appearances, mailings, and television ads to educate voters and to defeat the ERA “once and for all!” LeHaye made only one appearance in Vermont in late October, but according to Ethel List, she seemed to understand little about the local campaign.<sup>61</sup>

LeHaye’s efforts gained momentum when Judy Armento of Brattleboro became CWA’s local representative and publicized her agenda by running as a Republican candidate for the Vermont Legislature. In the 1970s Armento had supported abortion rights and even served on the board of Planned Parenthood of Vermont, but feminism proved unsatisfying for her after two bad marriages collapsed and she found herself relying on welfare to support her children. Renewing her faith as a born-again Christian, she relocated to New Jersey, where she ran a childcare center for eighteen years. Eventually she joined CWA as a means to enact her traditional values. Insisting that leaders of NOW “do *not* speak for us — Concerned Women of America,” Armento claimed that CWA had a thousand members in Vermont and that it represented the Judeo-Christian values of most American women.<sup>62</sup> As it turned out, her Democratic opponent, Representative Robert Emond, also refused to support the ERA proposal. Both candidates publicly denounced the measure because they believed it would ensure equal rights for gays and lesbians in Vermont’s constitution. An effective spokeswoman, Armento used her candidacy to focus on the ERA and disbursed funds from CWA to underwrite a local media campaign and to hire a communications consultant. She circulated fundraising brochures from Brattleboro using CWA models to ensure her credentials as a Vermont-based organization.<sup>63</sup>

Recognizing their minority status in the debate, anti-ERA organizations hoped to avoid public scrutiny of their funding sources and to upend the political establishment at the end of the campaign by emerging as the real Vermonters against radical outsiders. Leaders of VRLC were especially sensitive to the fact that a majority of voters, the political establishment, and the press believed abortion was a woman’s choice. As a result, they developed multiple strategies to reach a broader constituency and sought to downplay their activities in the anti-ERA movement. Members were warned not to publicize their consultations with political operatives from Maine to avoid alerting VCERA and the press. Their small-media project was “designed to look like a ground-swell of local community, grassroots opposition that mushrooms like a nuclear cloud” to alarm ERA proponents.<sup>64</sup>

In another “secret strategy,” VRLC members Mary Beerworth of Troy and her sister Michelle Morin of Morrisville quietly organized Vermont Women Against the ERA to “take the opponents by surprise.” A thirty-year-old mother of three at the time, Beerworth and her sister were raised in a large Catholic family in Jericho. She was not only passionate about ending abortion, but also motivated by her own experience balancing work with motherhood. Frustrated with feminists and appalled at the radicals, Beerworth believed they were narrowing women’s choices rather than validating their natural desire to raise children. Recognizing that other like-minded women were too intimidated by feminists to speak out, she and her sister helped organize an anti-ERA petition drive to reach them through neighborhood networks and small gatherings. They distributed signature forms to key female contacts, hoping each would gather twenty-five signatures. By October, when Beerworth held a press conference in Burlington, they had gathered approximately 2,000 women’s signatures on a petition opposing the ERA. Proclaiming their home-grown status, Beerworth denounced the radical feminists of NOW, who “do not speak for us.” Vermont’s working women would “gain nothing” from the ERA, she explained, and “home-makers” would “lose their rights of security”; the GCW did not represent “real Vermont women,” nor did the ERA “spring from the grass-roots of Vermont.”<sup>65</sup> In this way, Beerworth repeated the constant complaint that outside influences were imposing their will on Vermonters, but conservatives were also relying on national organizational support.

Both sides of the ERA debate blamed external forces and money for misleading Vermonters, which began to erode voter confidence that the ERA would benefit the state. Opponents criticized Education Commissioner Stephen Kaagan for using \$1,300 from a federal sex-equity grant to circulate a packet of primary source documents detailing legislative action on the proposed amendment as a civics lesson for students. The complaint prompted the editor of the *Burlington Free Press* to demand that the administration explain this apparently partisan expenditure of federal funds to promote a political issue. Republican John McClaughry of Kirby, a former Reagan policy advisor and long-time conservative critic of state spending, was also quick to contest the action and contact federal officials about the potential misuse of funds.<sup>66</sup>

McClaughry had already voiced larger concerns about the legal ramifications of the ERA, fearing Vermont’s liberal courts would use its vague wording to impose a wide range of unwelcome social policies on Vermonters. In a repeat of the federal ERA debate, McClaughry and



Republican Michael Jacobs of Jericho, both members of the American Legion, argued that the ERA would upend veterans' preference in hiring for federal and state jobs because 98 percent of veterans were male; moreover, state-regulated veterans organizations could lose their tax-exempt status and state liquor licenses if courts determined that membership constituted *de facto* discrimination against women. The issue pitted veterans groups against Donald Edwards, adjutant general of the Vermont National Guard, who insisted that the ERA had nothing to do with veterans' preference. Spokeswomen for VCERA noted that previous claims against the preference had failed because it was not intentionally discriminatory; moreover, the rising number of women veterans would also reap the advantage. McClaughry countered that the ERA would result in a stricter standard of review for sex discrimination, invalidating the question of intent.<sup>67</sup>

Unfortunately, the issue lent weight to the notion that more rights for women meant fewer for men, just the kind of argument that members of VCERA had hoped to avoid. Equally damaging in that regard was the question of the ERA's impact on gender-based insurance rates regulated by the state and therefore potentially subject to sex discrimination lawsuits. While proponents claimed that insurance companies regularly charged women more for health and disability insurance and paid women less in monthly pension and life insurance benefits, opponents were quick to inform young women that their auto and life insurance premiums would rise.<sup>68</sup> With little clarity about the likely effects of unisex insurance rates or whether regulation constituted public action, the debate persisted throughout the campaign, leaving voters to question whether the ERA would benefit women or not.

Yet none of these complex issues with indeterminate consequences energized the public debate more than the question of outsider money and influence warping the Vermont tradition of civil discourse and cultural values. In March 1985, Secretary of State Jim Douglas had ruled that campaign finance laws applied to political activity related to the ERA referendum; organizations or individuals spending more than \$500 must register and contributions were limited to \$1,000 from individuals and \$5,000 from PACs. VCERA complied by submitting meticulous accounts of every dollar raised and expended, much of it from individual donors or Vermont-based organizations. Meanwhile, the opponents, who preferred to conceal their activities and outside funding, challenged Douglas's ruling, claiming that the campaign finance law did not apply to the referendum and especially not to non-Vermont groups for which the caps were unconstitutional. Their activities were purely



educational, according to Judy Armento of CWA; if she was required to file, so too was Commissioner Kaagan, who had sent materials on the ERA to the schools. Eventually, most opponents filed either late or incomplete reports, and the administration declined to pursue contribution limitations outside Vermont.<sup>69</sup>

VCERA's transparency allowed the press to verify that most ERA support came from Vermonters in small donations, which gave the coalition an advantage in the debate over outsider influence. In the final tally, VCERA raised approximately \$280,000; NOW and smaller local groups increased the total support for the ERA to \$422,501, while opponents reported a total of \$317,241. Both the ERA Information Committee and CWA relied on money from donors and PACs outside the state while also claiming that radical feminists from NOW were telling Vermonters how to vote. With \$270,752, largely from Eagle Forum and other national conservative PACs, Nancy Stringer had no shortage of funds to compete with VCERA for television ads at the end of the campaign. She filed reports systematically but refused to acknowledge publicly that the bulk of her funds came through Schlafly's national network of individual donors, who wrote checks directly to the Vermont organization.<sup>70</sup>

Leaders of VRLC, on the other hand, refused to file reports and effectively camouflaged their activities by donating through the Vermont Committee on Responsible Government's PAC or by subverting the filing requirement. To avoid the \$500 threshold, VRLC minimized expenses by printing thousands of brochures and selling them to small local groups and individuals for distribution at little cost. Ethel List claimed they were purely educational and factual. She also wrote radio ads and had them produced with VRLC funds at WGLY, a Christian radio station in Waterbury, which in turn sold them for \$4 to three-member sponsoring groups, such as Lamoille Committee for Traditional Values, Waterbury Citizens for Religious Rights, and Waterbury Medical Concerns Committee, comprised of VRLC associates. The scheme, which she claimed was a "private action" on her part, not only obscured the source of funds, but also enhanced the appearance of a groundswell of local organizing against the ERA.<sup>71</sup>

In the final weeks of the campaign, newspaper coverage and radio and television advertising heightened the emotional tenor of the debate as both sides charged their opponents with misinformation, outsider influence, or lack of transparency. Without providing much independent analysis, the press became a tool for each side to manipulate. Influential urban newspapers, including the *Rutland Herald*, *Burlington Free*

*Press, Times Argus, Brattleboro Reformer, St. Albans Messenger, and Valley News*, provided positive coverage and editorials while also reporting opponents' most speculative claims and providing space for spicy letters to the editor. The *Caledonia Record* of St. Johnsbury was the most widely circulated paper opposed to the ERA and reflected concerns among its subscribers, many of whom sent negative letters to the editor. Claiming that "equality is a moral issue" and "cannot be legislated," the editor reiterated unease about the "hidden agenda," "ambiguous language," and "out-of-state voices and money" that dominated the media coverage.<sup>72</sup>

While city editors heightened controversy over the ERA, radio and television ads became a playing field for the final contest. Both sides sponsored negative advertising on friendly stations, thereby reaching different audiences. In a setback for VCERA, local TV stations WCAX (CBS) and WPTZ (NBC) declined to run ERA-related ads while WVNY (ABC) supported the opposition. Heglund feared VCERA would be outspent on regional stations and unable to influence uninformed voters, yet she also surmised that the absence of negative ads on the leading stations could prove helpful. Frustrated with inadequate media coverage, Nadene Martin, VCERA's press secretary, bemoaned her inability to counter opponents' claims that the ERA threatened "an upheaval of your whole social system." By the end of October, a poll by Becker Institute indicated that support for the ERA had fallen from 64 percent in June to 57 percent, and opposition had risen from 27 to 34 percent, with 9 percent still undecided.<sup>73</sup>

By that time the state ERA had also infected party politics, despite the legacy of nonpartisanship on the issue in Vermont. With a gubernatorial candidate and legislative leaders strongly in favor of the state ERA, Democrats kept dissent over the issue at bay despite rumors about efforts to change the platform. Frustrated by concerns that she could lose the urban Democratic base to Independent Bernie Sanders, Governor Kunin downplayed the issue publicly while she worked behind the scenes to support the campaign in any way she could.<sup>74</sup>

Republicans, on the other hand, were startled when a small group of conservatives succeeded in rewording the GOP platform supporting the ERA at their September convention. Presented as a compromise, the new document replaced a commitment to "equal rights regardless of sex" with assurance that "every Vermonter" deserved "equal protection of the laws regardless of race, creed, gender or national origin." The alteration diluted the issue, eliminated the word "sex" to placate conservatives, and pointed instead to legislative rather than constitu-

tional remedies. Northern Vermont opponents, including James Ganger of VCRG, who encouraged conservatives to attend the GOP convention, and John McClaughry, apparently outlasted moderates, many of whom had left before a final vote (66 to 44) on the new language. The outcome angered the Vermont Federation of Republican Women, whose members denounced the change and the process, while the party's gubernatorial and congressional candidates expressed their dismay at a plank that contradicted their long-term support for the ERA. Representatives Anne Batten of Hardwick and Jane Mendicino of Essex Junction, who had struggled to keep the federation committed to the issue, warned that the change could influence electoral outcomes and hoped Republicans would "wake up" and "become more active."<sup>75</sup>

The GOP division rattled members of VCERA out of any remaining complacency and energized both sides in the final get-out-the vote campaign. VCERA activated county phone banks, and volunteers dispersed literature while opponents bombarded conservative radio and TV stations, flooded supermarkets with flyers, and continued to reach out to like-minded neighbors. In Morrisville, one frustrated pro-ERA coordinator noted that everywhere she went she "saw the opposition's neat little rolled up packages" of misinformation on doorknobs, which scared her "enough to keep on trucking in spite of threatening dogs and disapproving faces."<sup>76</sup>

On November 4, 1986, the loosely linked efforts of ERA opponents proved successful despite VCERA's systematic and centralized approach to reaching voters. With a slim margin of 3.4 percent, a small group of activists claimed an historic victory over Vermont's political establishment. Yet the vote had little effect on other electoral outcomes.<sup>77</sup> Governor Kunin defeated her rivals by significant margins; Democrats maintained control of the senate and reaped a slim majority in the house after one member switched parties. Leaders of VRLC, who had little confidence in the GOP, were delighted yet also chagrined that their margin of victory failed to match that of their counterparts in Maine. Lynn Heglund, the GCW, and allies supporting VCERA faced the defeat with disbelief, self-examination, and a reassessment of how to capture the energy released by the campaign. Each side blamed the other for the outcome. Proponents repeated charges of "scare" tactics, "disinformation," outsider funding, and outrageous marketing of fears about homosexuality and AIDS; opponents complained about the arrogance and elitism of VCERA's leaders, who had dismissed attempts at compromise and disrespected the intelligence and integrity of those with legitimate moral concerns. Calmer voices noted the difficulty of

approving state constitutional amendments in Vermont and referenda in general when social and moral issues are involved. Since 1975 state ERAs had failed in every state except Massachusetts in 1976.<sup>78</sup>

In the end, Vermonters settled for the status quo. A majority of voters remained unconvinced that the ERA would benefit them and wary of the rising power of professional women and politicians. Through their grassroots efforts, opponents were able to create the perception of a significant number of “real” Vermonters willing to challenge party leaders. Their efforts emboldened conservative women to get out the vote among their networks of friends and neighbors and gave license to Democratic and working-class men to vote no in the voting booth. A CBS exit poll indicated that only 45 percent of men voted for the amendment compared with 58 percent of women. The ERA failed to pass in Rutland, Winooski, St. Johnsbury, St. Albans, and Barre, cities with significant working-class and Catholic constituencies. As one commentator noted, “there was no marriage between working-class Democratic philosophy and equal rights for women.”<sup>79</sup> Yet Democrats were happy enough with a woman as governor. While leafleting at the General Electric plant in Burlington, members of NOW observed union members sporting Leahy buttons while distributing STOP ERA flyers. Political analysts Clark Benson and Frank Bryan concluded that socioeconomic status was the strongest factor in the outcome: “the ERA did better in high growth, high income, and high education towns.” According to John McClaughry, working-class men and their wives resented the attitude of campaign leaders, many of whom appeared to be flatlanders who belittled their religious values and traditional family lifestyles.<sup>80</sup> Regional differences support this conclusion; southern towns were most likely to vote for the ERA, while rural counties in the north rejected it, including Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Orleans, where growth was slower and opponents had been actively injecting voters with doubt.

## CONCLUSION

The rise of a conservative grassroots movement fueled by anti-abortion fervor, especially among women, provided the necessary outreach into Vermont’s rural and working-class communities to defeat the state ERA. With support from national organizations, they elevated every potential threat to a perceived outcome, transforming the debate over citizens’ rights into a social and moral issue for each voter to evaluate based upon established social norms. To be sure, it was easier to magnify fears about the future than to demonstrate specific legal outcomes

or the benefits of social change. In a letter to Governor Kunin, a woman from Randolph expressed those fears as she urged the governor to do all she could to prevent the destruction of our nation and the world from the ERA and its feminist proponents.<sup>81</sup>

Supporters of the state ERA, on the other hand, faced a significant challenge in demonstrating the need to change the constitution. In response to another correspondent who wondered what the ERA would do for her, Governor Kunin replied that it would provide a constitutional guarantee for the future and would affirm “that men and women were equal partners in marriage.” In hindsight, she acknowledged that people needed more than this kind of “symbolic” reason to vote for an amendment. By 1986 recent state legislation and federal legal cases had redressed gender inequities to a considerable extent. Ironically, the more that feminists championed the ERA’s economic benefits for women, the more opponents could claim it would result in rabid individualism, wreak havoc with spousal relationships, denigrate homemaking, and erode traditional family responsibilities.<sup>82</sup> Even as support for the issue waned, proponents continued to believe the reasonable majority would prevail and that Vermonters would maintain their long tradition of equal rights. To her credit, Lynn Heglund persistently warned about lingering complacency, but her position within state government and dissension within the campaign limited her ability to monitor all the players on the political stage. “We underestimated the complacency of our supporters,” she concluded, “and we underestimated the marketing of fear.” They also misunderstood the organizational reach of the anti-abortion movement, the strength of Christian evangelicalism, and popular distaste for feminist activism. In a letter to the *Burlington Free Press*, Yves Nadeau of Burlington noted that “many men” were “somewhat passive” on the issue, but the “anti-ERA women showed their moral courage, strength, and stability,” compared with the “hate and envy of pro-ERA feminists.”<sup>83</sup>

By the mid-1980s, Vermonters were not immune to the backlash against feminism, lesbian activism, and the spread of AIDS that had infected the media’s portrayal of the women’s movement and doomed the federal ERA. No longer a quest for equality at work, at home, in education, and in politics, the movement was portrayed as a hotbed of sexualized revolutionaries and lesbian radicals. Kunin’s correspondent from Randolph believed that NOW and Planned Parenthood were “blatantly anti-family, and anti-moral.” They are opposed to “all the highest and finest this country was founded upon,” she insisted, and “that high standard is seriously eroded today, in large part due to their

activities.” Men like John McClaughry who acknowledged the merits of equal rights for women were convinced that feminist radicals would turn the ERA into a “legal weapon to get the judiciary to inflict [sic] [their] policies on society.”<sup>84</sup> In rural areas of the state, traditional homemakers unfamiliar with new lifestyles found the threat of gay marriage frightening, or they were just unaware of the issue. As one Orange County observer noted, “the average Vermont housewife couldn’t have cared less. She was busy with her family and her community.” After the vote, Governor Kunin concluded that it was a chance for people to “say no to the women’s movement and say enough is enough.”<sup>85</sup>

Despite the display of emotional fireworks, the state ERA campaign had little long-term impact on partisan politics in Vermont. Reverend Paul Weaver initially proclaimed that, “conservatives with traditional values have become a political force in Vermont,” but his prediction proved unfounded. Moderates continued to maintain GOP leadership, and in 1990 the electorate reinstated Richard Snelling as governor. Reverend James Gangwer, who had ventured into politics as a religious leader, believed he could better serve his parishioners by returning his attention to the pulpit.<sup>86</sup> Meanwhile, the number of women legislators rose dramatically in the 1990s; by 2017 they comprised 39.4 percent of the total, the second highest in the nation. The GCW collaborated with key legislators to introduce a gender-neutral language amendment in 1991, and three years later with little serious opposition, Vermonters agreed to include women in the constitution simply by replacing male-specific language.<sup>87</sup>

While the outcome of the ERA campaign proved to be an anomaly in Vermont politics, it followed the national pattern, and its failure signaled an end to the long battle over the amendment. Phyllis Schlafly was quick to praise Vermonters for “having the good judgment to put the final nail in the coffin” of the ERA.<sup>88</sup> The Vermont campaign had proved once again that the issue could politicize masses of women and stimulate the development of pro-family politics. To the dismay of NOW, the ERA had become a symbol of failure and an easy target for conservatives. Yet, hoping to prove Schlafly wrong, feminists sought to keep the issue alive by either restarting the old campaign or introducing a new amendment. In 2017 four ERA bills were presented in Congress, two more states recently approved the original amendment, and in 2019 a new generation of activists proposed an all-inclusive ERA amendment to the Vermont Constitution.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Madeleine Kunin, *Living a Political Life* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 66-68.

<sup>2</sup> Married women's property rights were expanded slowly in 1847, 1867, 1884, 1888, and 1919. The Vermont Constitutional Convention of 1870 rejected a proposal to include woman suffrage in the state constitution. Tax-paying women gained the right to vote in school meetings in 1880 and in town meetings in 1917. Vermont failed to ratify the 19th Amendment before 1920, and women were not allowed to sit on juries until 1942. For a discussion of the barriers women faced, see Deborah P. Clifford, "The Drive for Women's Municipal Suffrage in Vermont, 1883-1917," *Vermont History* 47 (Summer 1979): 173-189.

<sup>3</sup> "Vermont ERA Organizers Brace for ERA Vote," *Burlington Free Press*, 13, November 1985, clipping, Box 16, fl. 34, Governor's Commission on the Status of Women Records, 1969-86 (SE-119), Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), Middlesex, Vt. Hereafter cited as GCW Papers. The GCW records on microfilm include internal documentation regarding public policy initiatives and a large collection of clippings from major Vermont news sources, some of which are undated or unidentifiable and labeled hereafter as "clipping."

<sup>4</sup> For analyses based on this premise, see Donald Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: A State and the Nation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Pamela Johnston Conover and Virginia Gray, *Feminism and the New Right: Conflict over the American Family* (New York: Praeger, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> For accounts of the failure of the amendment, see especially, Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Mathews and De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA*; Mary Frances Berry, *Why ERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Janet K. Boles, *The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment: Conflict and the Decision Process* (New York and London: Longman, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 217-227, 235-254; Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 136-142, 163-167; Catherine E. Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 212-38; Marjorie J. Spruill, "Gender and America's Right Turn," in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, eds. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 71-89; Conover and Gray, *Feminism and the New Right*, 74-87.

<sup>7</sup> Clark Benson and Frank Bryan, "Strengthening Democratic Control: Vermont's 1986 Election in Historical Perspective," *Vermont History* 56 (Fall 1988): 213-229; Joe Sherman, *Fast Lane on a Dirt Road: Vermont Transformed, 1945-1990* (Woodstock, VT: Countryman Press, 1991); Yvonne Daley, *Going Up the Country: When the Hippies, Dreamers, Freaks, and Radicals Moved to Vermont* (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, 2018), 13-32; 146-151.

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Allen, "Lenore Whitman McNeer," in *Those Intriguing Indomitable Vermont Women*, ed. Jean K. Smith (n.p.: Vermont State Division of the American Association of University Women, 1980), 78-79; for GCW activities from 1970 to 1972, see Correspondence, Commission on Women, Governor Deane C. Davis records, 1969-1972 (A-181) Box 30, fl.20, VSARA; and Publicity: Public Relations, Box 10, fl. 11, GCW Papers. In *Beecher v. Leahy*, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that Vermont's 1844 statute criminalizing physicians for performing abortion procedures was unconstitutional.

<sup>9</sup> "Newsletter of the Vermont Women's Political Caucus," (June 1972), and VWPC, "Equal Rights Amendment," September 1972, Box 11, fl. 21; "Vermont Women Set Sights on Political Movement," *Burlington Free Press*, 20 March 1972; "Women's Rights Panel Stacked," Barre-Montpelier *Times Argus*, 24 June 1972, Box 10, fl. 11, GCW Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Karen Kent, "Report on Equal Rights Amendment," n.d., Box 11, fl. 11, GCW Papers; Louise Swainbank, interview with Jane Beck, St. Johnsbury, Vt., 6 December 2001, Snelling Center Project, Vermont Folklife Center, Middlebury, Vt.

<sup>11</sup> "House Swiftly Passes Amendment on Women's Rights," *Rutland Daily Herald*, 13 January 1973; "Women's Rights Amendment Ducks Sidetrack Move," clipping, n.p., n.d., Box 10, fl. 11, GCW Papers.

<sup>12</sup> "Much Support for Equal Rights is Voiced," *Times Argus*, 25 January 1973; "'Equal Rights' for Women Ignores God's Laws Witnesses Tell Senate Judiciary Committee," *Times Argus*, 7 February 1973, Box 11, fl. 19, GCW Papers.

<sup>13</sup> Kent, "Report on Equal Rights Amendment," 5; Lenore Whitman McNeer, "Women Coming of Age: Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment: An Analysis How To Do It," June 1973;



“Rights Amendment OK Expected Today,” *Burlington Free Press*, 21 February 1973; “Sen. Harwood and the ERA,” *Bennington Banner*, 21 February 1973; “ERA Speeds Destruction of Motherhood Image,” *Burlington Vermont Sunday News*, clipping, n.d., Box 11, fl. 11, GCW Papers.

<sup>14</sup> Mrs. John R. Collier, “Doesn’t Anyone Care . . . ?” *Burlington Free Press*, 14 March 1973, Box 10, fl. 11, GCW Papers.

<sup>15</sup> *Equal Rights Monitor* (Nov/Dec 1976), Box 11, fl. 11; Martha Weinman Lear, “You’ll Probably Think I’m Stupid,” clipping, n.p., n.d., Box 11, fl. 19, GCW Papers; Stacie Taranto, *Kitchen Table Politics: Conservative Women and Family Values in New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), chap. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Darlene Perkins, Vermont Caucus on the Family, to “Friend of the Family,” n.d., Box 11, fl. 33, GCW Papers.

<sup>17</sup> “Morrisville’s Darlene Perkins Battles to Overturn State’s ERA,” *Vermont Sunday News*, 18 January 1976; “ERA,” *Washington World*, (January 15-28 1976) 1-2; “Anti-ERA Movement Gaining Momentum,” *Times Argus*, 6 December 1975, Box 11, fl. 19, GCW Papers; for additional material on VCF and the lawsuit, see Box 11, fl. 33, GCW Papers.

<sup>18</sup> Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly*, 212-242.

<sup>19</sup> “ERA Opponents Threaten Suit,” *Burlington Free Press*, 17 December 1975; Bruce Graham to Constance Kite, 12 December 1975; “Anti-ERA Movement Gaining Momentum,” *Times Argus*, 6 December 1975, both in Box 11, fl. 8; STOP ERA Georgia, “To the Legislators of Georgia,” Box 11, fl. 33, GCW Papers; on a similar lawsuit in New York, see Taranto, *Kitchen Table Politics*, 119-120.

<sup>20</sup> Betty [Staack] to Connie [Kite], 1 January 1976, Box 11, fl. 8; Constance Kite to Executive Board, GCW, n.d., Box 11, fl. 4; “Quiet Debate Brings Divisions over Equal Rights into Focus,” *Times Argus*, 26 January 1976; letters to the editor, *Burlington Free Press*, 4 February 76, Box 11, fl. 19, GCW Papers.

<sup>21</sup> “ERA Rescission Move Sparks Emotional Debate,” 25 January 1976, *Times Argus*; “Women’s Equal Rights in Elaborate Argument,” *Rutland Daily Herald*, 23 January 1976, Box 11, fl. 19, GCW Papers; Louise Swainbank, interview.

<sup>22</sup> “ERA Advocacy Tested in State Court,” *Times Argus*, n.d.; Darlene Perkins, “Public View Immaterial,” *Times Argus*, 13 February 1976; “State Panel’s ERA Support Upheld,” *Rutland Daily Herald*, 12 March 1976, Box 11, fl. 19, GCW Papers.

<sup>23</sup> For an in-depth analysis of International Women’s Year, see Marjorie J. Spruill, *Divided We Stand: The Battle over Women’s Rights and Family Values that Polarized American Politics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> “Nation’s First ‘Women’s Year’ Meet Draws 1,000 Vermonters,” *Sunday Rutland Herald and Sunday Times Argus*, 27 February 1977, Box 13, fl. 10; “Resolutions Acted Upon by the Meeting on February 26, 1977,” Box 13, fl. 13, GCW Papers; Spruill, *Divided We Stand*, 134-135.

<sup>25</sup> Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly*, 244-267; Spruill, *Divided We Stand*, 191-193; 286-290, 292-313.

<sup>26</sup> The number of women legislators rose from 20 in the 1973-74 session to 34 in 1983-84. See Vermont General Assembly, *Legislative Membership Roster, 1966-2006*, comp. Clark H. Benson (Lake Ridge, VA: Polidata, 2006), 32-33.

<sup>27</sup> Anne Sarcka, interview with author, 18 November 2015; Nancy Port, interview by phone with author, 8 October 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Rita Edwards, interview with author, 4 April 2016; Neil Davis, “Vt. ERA Revives Dream,” *Burlington Free Press*, September 1982, Box 16, fl. 28, GCW Papers. For Snelling’s relationship with NOW and the ERA, see also Snelling Papers (A184), Box 107, fl. 12; Box 2, fl. 15, 16, 19, VSARA.

<sup>29</sup> Martha McVicker, *State ERA Study* (Montpelier, VT: [Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women, 1982]); Memo, Martha McVicker to Anne Sarcka, Claire Anderson, Rita Edwards, Betty Jones, 11 August 1982, Box 15, fl. 31; Memo, Claire Anderson and Joanne Crisman, ERA Campaign Co-Chairs to Coordinators, 24 January 1983, Box 15, fl. 9, GCW Papers.

<sup>30</sup> Richard A. Snelling, testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, 13 January 1983, p. 3; Senate Judiciary Hearing, transcript, 1 February 1983; House Judiciary Hearing, transcript, 15 March 1983, Vermont Coalition for the ERA Papers, DOC 429, fl. 41 and 42, Leahy Library, Vermont History Center, Barre, Vt. Hereafter cited as VCERA Papers. The VCERA collection is comprised of material from the coalition office in Montpelier, which operated separately from the GCW. It includes some duplications with the GCW Papers, including transcripts of the hearings cited here.

<sup>31</sup> Reverend James Gangwer, testimony, Senate Judiciary Hearing, transcript, 1 February, 1983, p. 36; Barbara Corwin and Keith Dunham, testimony, House Judiciary Hearing, transcript, 15 March 1983, p. 17-18, DOC 429, fl. 41 and 42, VCERA Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Lynn Heglund Papers, MSA 331, Leahy Library, Vermont History Center.

<sup>33</sup> Maryann Barakso, *Governing NOW: Grassroots Activism in the National Organization for Women* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 90-111; Ethel List, “Pro-Lifers Do Not

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Ignore Plight of Women,” *Burlington Free Press*, 7 June 1985; “Pro-Life Activity is More Visible Throughout State,” *Burlington Free Press*, 8 December 1985, Box 16, fl. 34, GCW Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Diane Eisler and Allie C. Hixson, *The Equal Rights Amendment: Facts and Action Guide* (n.p.: National Women’s Conference Center and the Kentucky Foundation for Women, 1986), 75-76, Box 15, fl. 19, GCW Papers; Patrick B. McGuigan, ed., *Initiative and Referendum Report* (June 1985): 14, Box 15, fl. 24, GCW Papers.

<sup>35</sup> “ERA Steering Committee Agenda,” and “ERA Alert,” *ACLU-VT Alert*, [February 1985], Box 15, fl. 9, GCW Papers; Mary Just Skinner, interview with author, 13 May 2016; Betty Nuovo, interview with author, 20 June 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Ann Moore, testimony, 51-52; Michelle Morin, testimony, 53-54, Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing, transcript, 23 January 1985, DOC 429, fl. 42, VCERA Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Reverend James Gangwer, testimony, 8; Bill St. Armour, testimony, 28-29; Bonnie Klimowski, testimony, 36-37; Muriel Williams, testimony, 7; Lynn Heglund, testimony, 31, House Judiciary Hearing, transcript, 19 February 1985, DOC 429, fl. 41, VCERA Papers.

<sup>38</sup> “ERA Supported in Poll,” *Times Argus*, 5 November 1985, DOC 429, fl. 29, VCERA Papers.

<sup>39</sup> “Voters Reject ERA by Margin of 2-1,” *Lewiston (ME) Daily Sun*, 7 November 1984; *Bangor (ME) Daily News*, 7 November 1984, DOC 429, fl.21, VCERA Papers; [Lynn Heglund], “Condensed Recommendations for Policy Based on the Maine 1984 ERA Campaign Loss,” Box 15, fl. 14, GCW Papers; “Time Line of Events, the Maine ERA Campaign,” typescript, MSA 331, fl.3, Heglund Papers.

<sup>40</sup> *Green Mountain Grassroots: A Newsletter from Common Cause/Vermont*, December 1985, [1], Box 16, fl. 34, GCW Papers.

<sup>41</sup> “Men Announce Formation of Group Supporting ERA,” *Burlington Free Press*, 29 January 1986; “Male Politicians Promote ERA,” *Times Argus*, 16 July 1986; “Men for ERA Group Facing Split,” *Burlington Free Press*, 25 September 1986, Box 16, fl. 35, 36, 37; Lynn Heglund to Governor Madeleine M. Kunin, memo, 12 September 1986, Box 14, fl. 18, GCW Papers.

<sup>42</sup> Lynn Heglund, memo for speakers, n.d., DOC 429, fl. 63, VCERA Papers.

<sup>43</sup> Heather Wishik to Vermont ERA Committee, 10 September 1985, DOC 429, fl. 61, VCERA Papers; Ester Sorrell to Liz [Bankowski], 6 March 1986, Box 67, fl. 1, Governor Madeleine M. Kunin Papers, (A185), VSARA; “NOW Coalition Selects New Chairman,” *Burlington Free Press*, 21 March 1986, clipping, Dennett Papers in possession of Charlotte Dennett; Anne Sarcka, interview.

<sup>44</sup> “Ellie Smeal’s Platform,” *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, (December 1985), in Box 15, fl. 18, GCW Papers; Barakso, *Governing NOW*, 107-111, quote on 110; “Vermont Targeted by ERA,” *Times Argus*, September 1985, Box 16, fl. 34; “Smeal Sees Vermont as Helping to Make ERA a National Issue,” *Burlington Free Press*, 26 March 1986, Box 16, fl. 35, GCW Papers.

<sup>45</sup> “The Real Goals of Women’s Lib,” *Schlafly Report*, (December 1985); Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly*, 217-227.

<sup>46</sup> “Accuracy of Schlafly Questioned,” *Rutland Herald*, 14 February 1986; “ERA Backers Tell Schlafly Stay Away,” *Burlington Free Press*, 14 February 1986; “Let’s Support ERA Without Stifling Free Expression,” *ibid.*, 15 February 1986; “ERA Director Gets a Vote of Confidence,” *ibid.*, 21 February 1986, all in Box 16, fl. 35, GCW Papers.

<sup>47</sup> Anne Sarcka to Eleanor Smeal, 30 July and 10 October 1986, Sarcka Papers in the possession of Anne Sarcka; “ERA Debate Staged,” *Burlington Free Press*, 1 March 1986 and additional clippings in Box 16, fl. 35, GWC Papers; Gretchen Bailey, interview with author, 12 November 2015.

<sup>48</sup> “NOW President Compares ERA Opponents to Fascists,” *Valley News*, 28 March 1986; “NOW President Promotes ERA,” *Times Argus*, 25 March 1986; “Smeal Sees Right Replaying ‘40s, ‘50s,” *Rutland Herald*, 27 March 1986; “Smeal Says Corporate Interests Oppose ERA,” *Rutland Herald*, 27 March 1986, Sarcka Papers.

<sup>49</sup> “Bishop Marshall’s Letter on ERA” and “Focus: Abortion, the Bishop and the ERA,” *Times Argus*, clippings, October 1985, Box 16, fl. 34; Lynn Heglund to Liz Bankowski, Ellen Lovell, memo, 14 June 1985, Box 15, fl. 14, GCW Papers; Anne Sarcka to Bishop John A. Marshall, 17 July 1986; Marshall to Sarcka, 24 July 1986, DOC 429, fl. 46, 47, VCERA Papers; Letters “To the Editor,” *Vermont Catholic Tribune*, 15, 29 April; 28 October 1986; “3 Catholics Oppose Bishop Marshall’s ERA Stance,” *Burlington Free Press*, 23 October 1986, clipping, Dennett Papers.

<sup>50</sup> “Court Ruling Stirs Up Debate,” *Burlington Free Press*, 28 April 1986; “State Must Pay for Abortions,” *Burlington Free Press*, 27 May 1986; “Kunin Decides Not to Appeal Abortion Ruling,” *Times Argus*, 5 May 1986, Box 16, fl. 35, GCW Papers. For the ruling on abortion funding, see *Doe v. Celani*, No. S81-84CnC (Vt. Super. Ct., 26 May 1986).

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, opponents’ flyers: Vermont Right to Life Committee, “ERA: More Than Meets the Eye,” DOC 429, fl. 62; and Vermont E.R.A. Information Committee, “What Does E.R.A. Mean to—Vermont?” DOC 429, fl. 21, VCERA Papers.

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<sup>52</sup> Ethel List, testimony, House Judiciary Committee Hearing, transcript, 15 March 1983, 20, DOC 429, fl. 41, VCERA Papers.

<sup>53</sup> Ethel List, interview with author, 12 April 2017; Mary Beerworth, interview with author, 30 March 2017; “Pro-Lifers Protest Abortion, ERA,” *Vermont Catholic Tribune*, 4 February 1986.

<sup>54</sup> Reverend Paul Weaver to “Friend,” 22 November 1985, 28 May 1986; “VCRG Vanguard: the Voice of Vermont Citizens for Responsible Government,” Summer 1986, DOC 429, fl. 75, VCERA Papers; “Vt. Campaign Stirring Up Passions,” *Burlington Free Press*, 23 March 1986, Box 16, fl. 35, GCW Papers; Ethel List, interview.

<sup>55</sup> “VCRG Vanguard,” Summer 1986, DOC 429, fl.75, VCERA Papers; “Anti-ERA President Leaves Her Post,” *Rutland Herald*, 24 May 1986; “Small Media Project,” typescript, Eleanor Elwert Papers, Vermont Right to Life Committee, Montpelier, Vt.; Ethel List, interview.

<sup>56</sup> Rickey Gard Diamond, “Who Are These People?” *Vermont Woman*, (14 October 1986): 14.

<sup>57</sup> Diamond, “Who Are These People?” 15, 18; Phyllis Schlafly, STOP ERA, Alton, Ill., to Eagle Friend, September 1986; Barbara Deyfek, Queens Center for Christ, Glen Oaks, N.Y., to “Friends,” January 1986, DOC 429, fl. 82, VCERA Papers; Lynn Heglund to Governor Madeleine M. Kunin, 6 October 1986, Box 14, fl. 18, GCW Papers.

<sup>58</sup> Nancy Stringer, testimony, Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing, transcript, 23 January 1985, 31-32, DOC 429, fl. 42, VCERA Papers.

<sup>59</sup> “What Does ERA Mean to—Vermont?” [flyer], DOC 429, fl. 21; Phyllis Schlafly to “Eagle Friend,” December 1985 and September 1986, DOC 429, fl. 82; Nancy Stringer to “Vermont Friend,” n. d., DOC 429, fl. 49; Vermont E.R.A. Information Committee, “The ERA Gay-AIDS Connection” [flyer], DOC 429, fl. 53, all in VCERA Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* (New York: Crown, 1991), 247-256; Ronnee Schreiber, *Righting Feminism: Conservative Women & American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 28-30.

<sup>61</sup> Connie Paige, “Watch on the Right: The Amazing Rise of Beverley LeHaye,” *Ms. Magazine* (February 1987), 24-27, Box 17, fl. 40; “Group Planning Vt. ERA Blitz,” *Times Argus*, 23 April 1986, Box 16, fl. 35, GCW Papers; Beverley LeHaye to Staff Members, “Confidential Memo,” DOC 429, fl. 82; LeHaye to “Dear Friend,” [July 1986], DOC 429, fl. 48, VCERA Papers; “Concerned Women Head Visits Vermont, Announces Disclosure,” *Burlington Free Press*, 24 October 1986, Box 16, fl. 38, GCW Papers; Ethel List, interview.

<sup>62</sup> Judy Armento, “ERA Supporters Don’t Speak for All Women,” *Times Argus*, August 1986, Box 16, fl. 36; “Campaign ‘86—Windham 2-2,” *Brattleboro Reformer*, 29 October 1986, Box 16, fl. 37, GCW Papers; “Judy Armento to be on TV,” and “Armento Discusses Welfare,” *Brattleboro Reformer*, 25, 26 October 1986; Diamond, “Who Are These People?” 15.

<sup>63</sup> “District 2 Candidates Attacked for Alleged Distortion of ERA,” [*Brattleboro Reformer*], n.d., clipping, Box 16, fl. 38, GCW Papers; Concerned Women of America of Vermont, “The Facts About Existing State ERA Laws” [brochure], MSA 505, fl. 13, Sue Clayton Papers, Leahy Library, Vermont History Center, Barre, Vt.

<sup>64</sup> “Small Media Project,” typescript, Elwert Papers.

<sup>65</sup> Ethel List to Chapter Chairmen and Female Key Contacts, 27 August 1986, Elwert Papers; Mary Beerworth, interview; “Women Against the ERA,” *Vermonters for Life Newsletter*, (October 1986); “ERA Foes Say Its Opposition Still Growing,” *Burlington Free Press*, 9 October 1986, Box 16, fl. 38, GCW Papers.

<sup>66</sup> “Bureaucrats Ought to Skip ERA Promotion,” *Burlington Free Press*, 6[?] June 1986; Deborah Sline, “Both Sides Should Be Heard In ERA Debate,” *Burlington Free Press*, 15 June 1986, both in Box 16, fl. 35, GCW papers; John McClaughry to Gary Bauer, Undersecretary of Education, 12, 18 June, 3 July 1986, Box 429, fl. 78, VCERA Papers.

<sup>67</sup> “Legion Votes to Oppose ERA,” *Times Argus*, 29 June 1986, Box 16, fl. 35, GCW Papers; Michael Jacobs, “ERA is Evil Creature,” *Rutland Herald*, 24 July 1986; John McClaughry, “Scorn for the ERA,” *Rutland Herald*, 9 September 1986; “The ERA and Vermont Veterans,” typescript, June 1986, DOC 429, fl. 71; see also John McClaughry, “A Skeptic’s Views,” *Vermont Affairs* (Summer/Fall 1986): 21-28.

<sup>68</sup> See for example, “Debate Rages Over ERA’s Effect on Insurance Rates” and “ERA’s Impact on Insurance Rates is Discussed,” *Burlington Free Press*, 16, 17 October 1986, Box 429, fl. 74, VCERA Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Box 2, fl. 2, 8, Campaign Finance Papers, 1986, Secretary of State Papers, James A. Douglas, 1973-1993, (Series A258), VSARA. Hereafter SS Papers; “Anti-ERA Group Asked to Reveal Financial Report,” *Burlington Free Press*, 9 August 1986, Box 429, fl. 20, VCERA Papers.

<sup>70</sup> “Most Anti-ERA Money Coming from Out of State,” *Burlington Free Press*, n.d.; “Schlafly, Out-of-Staters Opposing ERA,” *Times Argus*, 2 August 1986, Box 16, fl. 36, GCW Papers. Total funds raised were calculated from campaign finance reports, which may have been incomplete. For campaign filings and amounts, see Box 2, fl. 2, 8, SS Papers.

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<sup>71</sup> “Small Media Project,” Elwert Papers; Ethel List, interview; “Right to Life Brochures Heat Up Debate Over ERA,” *Burlington Free Press*, 7 October 1986; “Right to Life’s List Defends Part She Played In ERA Ads,” *Times Argus*, 30 October 1986; James A. Douglas to Ethel List, 8 October 1986, Box 2, fl. 2; “Ads Against ERA Tied to Pro-Lifers,” *Burlington Free Press*, 25 October 1986, and “Douglas, AG to Discuss Anti-ERA Ads,” n.d., clippings in Box 2, fl.8, SS Papers.

<sup>72</sup> “ERA,” *Caledonia Record*, 25 October 1986. For major newspaper coverage, see clippings, September to November 1986, in Box 16, fl. 37-39, GCW Papers.

<sup>73</sup> “WPTZ Joins Blackout On ERA Ads,” *Burlington Free Press*, 18 September 1986, Box 16, fl. 37; Lynn Heglund to Governor Madeleine Kunin, 6 October 1986, Box 16, fl. 18, GCW Papers; quotation from Nadene Martin, interview with author, 8 June 2016; “Kunin, Leahy Lead in Poll by Becker Institute,” *Burlington Free Press*, 28 October 1986, Box 16, fl. 38, GCW Papers. A poll by the *Rutland Herald* resulted in a 55 percent to 37 percent split.

<sup>74</sup> “Governor Kunin Speaks Out for Equal Rights,” 20 September 1986, clipping, VCERA newsletter; “Some Dems Try to Cut ERA Plank” and “Democratic Battle Over ERA Looms,” *Burlington Free Press*, 18 September 1986, Box 16, fl. 37, GCW Papers; see also, Governor Madeleine M. Kunin Papers, (Series A185), Box 67, fl. 1, VSARA.

<sup>75</sup> “Vermont GOP Splits With Its Top Candidates on Issue of ERA,” and “ERA Reversal Draws Anger of GOP Women,” *Times Argus*, 14, 15 September 1986, Box 16, fl. 37, GCW Papers; “Area GOP Dislikes ERA Cut,” *Rutland Herald*, 16 September 1986, Elwert Papers; James Gangwer, interview by phone with author, 23 September 2016; John McClaughry, interview by phone with author, 17 October 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Wanda Morton to Anne Sarcka, 13 December 1986, MSA 505, fl. 3, Clayton Papers.

<sup>77</sup> Benson and Bryan, “Strengthening Democratic Control,” 223-226.

<sup>78</sup> Mary Beerworth, interview; “The Vote Against the ERA in Vermont,” WVNY-TV22 editorial, 12 November 1986, Elwert Papers; VCERA Meeting Minutes, 22 November 1986, MSA 505, fl. 1, Clayton Papers; Scott Skinner, “A Setback for Equal Rights,” [December 1986], unidentified clipping, Mary Skinner files; Kristen R. Blair, “Voters Reject Contentious Social Justice/Moral Ballot Propositions,” *Initiative and Referendum Report* (December 1986/January 1987): 1-3; Blair and Patrick B. McGuigan, “Vermont ERA Supporters Hope to Reverse ERA Trends,” *Initiative and Referendum Report* (June 1985): 11-14; see also post-election clippings in Box 16, fl. 39, GCW Papers.

<sup>79</sup> Jennifer Wallace Brodeur, “State ERA Defeated,” *Vermont Woman*, December 1986, 24-25; “Defeat of ERA Pinned on Ads,” *Rutland Herald*, 5 November 1986; quote from “County Vote Shows Shift to the Left,” *Rutland Herald*, 6 November 1986, Box 16, fl. 39, 40, GCW Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Benson and Bryan, “Strengthening Democratic Control,” 225; Charlotte Dennett, “Reflections on the ERA,” typescript, Dennett Papers; John McClaughry, “ERA Victim of Backers’ With a Healthy Dose of Class,” *Sunday Rutland Herald and Sunday Times Argus*, 21 December 1986, Box 16, fl. 40, GWC Papers.

<sup>81</sup> Mary C. Clapp to Governor Madeleine M. Kunin, 1 February 1986, Box 67, fl. 1, Kunin Papers.

<sup>82</sup> Governor Madeleine M. Kunin to Martha Smith, 7 March 1986, Box 67, fl. 1, Kunin Papers; Madeleine Kunin, interview with author, 18 October 2017; Conover and Gray, *Feminism and the New Right*, 85-89.

<sup>83</sup> Eleanor J. Baker, “The ERA is Dead! Long Live the ERA!” *The Guardian*, December 1986, MSA 331, fl. 6, Heglund Papers; Yves Nadeau, “Thankful for Defeat,” in “Forum,” *Burlington Free Press*, 8 December 1986.

<sup>84</sup> Faludi, *Backlash*, chap. 4; Clapp to Kunin, 1 February 1986, Box 67, fl. 1, Kunin Papers; McClaughry, “ERA a Victim of Backers’ with a Healthy Dose of Class.”

<sup>85</sup> Quotation from Rita Edwards, interview; Governor Madeleine M. Kunin to Anne Sarcka and Beth Fouhy, 24 November 86, Box 67, fl. 1, Kunin Papers.

<sup>86</sup> “Both Sides Claim ERA Momentum,” *Burlington Free Press*, 6 November 1986, Box 16, fl. 39, GCW Papers; James Gangwer, interview by phone.

<sup>87</sup> “Change the Story: Advancing Women, Powering the Economy,” *Status Report: Vermont Women and Leadership* (South Burlington, VT: Change the Story VT, 2017), 2.

<sup>88</sup> “Both Sides Claim ERA Momentum”; Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur, “State ERA Defeated,” 24-25.