



## Business and Professional Women/FL

### Legislative Information

#### **SUPPORT SCR1008 /HCR8003**

*To ensure that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”*

Sponsored by Senator Arthenia Joyner and Representative Juan-Carlos Planas

- Despite all of the progress women have made, they continue to suffer discrimination in employment, insurance, health care, education, the criminal justice system, social security, and pensions.
- Controlling for experience and education, women still earn 13% less on average than their male peers. For women of color, this statistic is even worse.
- The Institute for Women’s Policy Research reports that the wage gap translates into a \$200 billion a year loss for American families, with the typical family losing \$4,000 per year.<sup>1</sup>
- Laws to prevent sex discrimination are simply not enough. The bleak reality is that because hard-won laws against sex discrimination do not rest on a strong constitutional foundation, they are essentially ephemeral.
- These federal laws and regulations contain many loopholes, are inconsistently interpreted or ignored, and may be weakened by amendments or repealed outright.
- Currently, elements of gender discrimination remain in statutory and case law. Courts have had difficulty applying a consistent standard to gender classifications because they are not currently comparable to racial or ethnic classifications under equal-protection analysis.
- The Equal Rights Amendment is necessary in order to have a clear constitutional guarantee that gender is considered a suspect classification and entitled to the same strict scrutiny that courts reserve for race, religion, and national origin.
- In 1998, Floridians voted overwhelmingly to include Revision 9 in the Florida State Constitution. Revision 9 is worded very similarly to the Equal Rights Amendment and states “all natural persons, female and male alike, are equal before the law.” This indicates that ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment would be consistent with the will of the majority of Florida’s voters.

**For these reasons, BPW/FL asks that you support the Equal Rights Amendment by voting “YES” on SCR1008 /HCR8003.**

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<sup>1</sup>*Equal Pay for Working Families: National and State Data on the Pay Gap and its Costs.*  
<http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C343.pdf>

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