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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0514

August 26, 2015

Dear Ms. Helene Swanson, Katrina's Dream members, and Attendees of Today's "Let's Pass the ERA" Women's Equality Day DC Rally:

Congratulations, Helene, on completing your cross-country pilgrimage to whip the 15 states that have not yet ratified the ERA into shape! I know that your mother-in-law is looking down on you with great pride right now.

To everyone here today—I'm sorry I couldn't be there to rally with you in person. I will, however, be celebrating Women's Equality Day in my district by holding an event with over 400 high school girls to discuss how important it is that we ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

As you all know, one of the purposes of Women's Equality Day is to highlight the work that's left to be done—and there's a lot we still have to do. Despite the progress we've made in the 95 years since women earned the right to vote, we still face pay discrimination, unfair workplace conditions, consistent attacks on our access to health care, and laws that favor the perpetrators over survivors in cases of sexual violence. What's worse is that the U.S. Constitution actually makes it harder to address these kinds of discrimination by limiting legislation and court action that might prevent it. 72 percent of Americans assume discrimination against women is banned by the text of the Constitution, but it's not. The truth is that equality for women simply isn't written in to our founding document.

That's why we must once and for all work together to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, which would finally add women's equality to the Constitution. Your efforts here are an important step toward this goal. After all, how can we have "liberty and justice for all" when a prohibition against sex discrimination is missing from our nation's blueprint?

I will continue to work with my colleague Senator Cardin to push for the passage of our joint resolution that would eliminate the time limit on the ERA, so that only three of the states that Helene visited would have to ratify the ERA to make it part of our Constitution.

Remember this—equality is only 3 states and 24 simple, but powerful words away: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Together we can make a better future for all women, our children, and our families.

Thank you again for all you've done in your pursuit of equality for all!

All the best,



Jackie Speier