

## The Equal Rights Amendment and Labor Market Outcomes for Women

Jen Boden

Third year paper submission

**Abstract:** The United States Constitution does not guarantee equal rights based on gender. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), passed by Congress in 1972, was intended to remedy this situation, but only thirty-five of the requisite thirty-eight states passed the law before its 1982 expiration. Making this topic relevant for today, the ratification of an unrelated amendment 203 years after its Congressional approval has given ERA supporters renewed hope of its eventual passage.

The state by state variation in terms of ERA ratification affords the opportunity to examine the labor market effects of this legislation. In addition to examining changes effects of the gender gap, we also look at married women in particular. Because married women as a group have the most flexibility in regard to choosing labor force participation status and hours of work, we investigate changes in labor force participation, probability of employment, hours worked, and salary. Because the existence of the gender wage gap has been well-established in the literature, the findings may be helpful in constructing policy interventions that can eliminate it. In this study, we find that married women are more likely to enter the labor force and become employed, but they experience no relative changes in terms of the number of hours worked or salaries. Relative to men, women chose increased labor force participation, experienced greater likelihood of employment, and received higher salaries.