

## EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Speech delivered before Senate January 25th

by  
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Wyoming

Mr. President, the Junior Senator from Wyoming is proud to have the privilege of sponsoring, together with some 30 other Members of this distinguished body, the equal-rights amendment. In doing so I am carrying on a tradition which has been in vogue in the State of Wyoming for some 81 years, for it was in the year 1869 that the first territorial legislature of my State convened, and it passed a women's suffrage act which was not only the first of its kind to be adopted in this Nation, but, I am advised, the first in all the world.

Again, Mr. President, in the Wyoming constitutional convention of 1889 proposition No. 25 providing for equal suffrage for women, was written into the State constitution. So I am pleased to support in the Senate of the United States a theory which has been in vogue in my own State so long and from which the State of Wyoming takes its name as the Equality State.

It is strange to relate, however, Mr. President, that it was only last year, 1949, or 80 years later, that the equality State finally, by an act of the legislature, permitted women to serve on juries in the district courts of the State. It is to obviate such situations or such injustices at this time that I have lent my wholehearted support to the passage of Senate Joint Resolution 25.

Mr. President, in passing I might say that in the original act of 1869 in the Wyoming Legislature crippling amendments were submitted. It would be very interesting, I think, if I were to comment briefly on some of those amendments. The original bill referred to the fair sex as "ladies." An amendment was submitted, the purpose of which was to delete the word "ladies" and insert the words "squaws and colored women."

Another crippling amendment, as I remember from reading Wyoming history, was submitted, the purpose of which was to lay the bill on the table until July 4, 100 years hence.

Mr. President, the enactment of the nineteenth amendment was thought to give women full equality with men. Actually, however, all it accomplished was simply to provide all women who were citizens of the United States with the unquestionable right to vote. It was then necessary for them, through efforts exerted in the legislatures of the several States, to attempt to get the other discriminatory statutes written off the books. In this effort they have been partially successful, but many States still maintain and enforce laws which are discriminatory against both married women and employed women.

I cannot help but feel, and in this I know thousands of men and women in all walks of life join me, that it is unfair with one hand to give a woman the right to vote in a democratic system of government and with the other hand make it impossible for her to follow her chosen line of work, which may be the only work in which she is trained or which she is capable of doing, by allowing, as I have said, discriminatory wage-and-hour legislation to be written into State laws. Nor is it fair and equitable for an individual State to determine that a woman citizen of

the State cannot bring a tort action for injury received to her own person unless her husband joins in the action, or cannot deed her own property without having her husband as a cograntor, or that a woman must have a court order or her husband's consent before she can establish a business or keep the profits from such business. Laws such as these make one gasp by their outmodedness and discrimination, but they exist in some States. In the States where they do exist, by the enactment of Senate Joint Resolution 25, we shall make it possible for a constitutional amendment on the subject subsequently to be adopted, thus removing any such discriminations.

Mr. President, our Constitution does not specifically differentiate between men and women, nor do the constitutions of the States having laws such as those just cited. But our courts, following the old English law, have interpreted the constitutions to apply only to men, thus making it necessary to specifically provide for the women of this country.

Mr. President, during the recent war, many of the barriers against women were dropped entirely or partially relaxed through necessity, and we found that the women of the United States willingly accepted the burdens cast upon them in military service and in war production; they joined shoulder to shoulder with the men of the Nation in our gigantic efforts. Let us, therefore, before these barricades become inalterably entrenched again, amend our Constitution to provide "equal justice under law"--the motto which we have caused to be carved on our Supreme Court Building. The one and only way of assuring this equal justice is by passage of Senate Joint Resolution 25 by this body, and then by untiring work to secure the ratification of the amendment by the necessary number of States.

Mr. President, in the event this body, the distinguished United States Senate, should deem it necessary to withhold equal rights from one-half of our population, I contend that they should not be withheld from the better half.