



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 12, 2013

Chair Garrett members of the committee.

My name is Jennifer Williamson and I represent house district 36 Portland's west side. Thank you for hearing HJR35 today. I am pleased to testify in support of HJR 35.

As you may be aware, this is a second-generation version of this bill. Earlier versions had raised some concerns among civil liberties groups and constitutional scholars. I believe those concerns have been resolved in this version and I expect you will hear more testimony regarding that later in this hearing.

I am proud that Oregon has strong protections for women in its constitution, statutes and case law and that Oregon was an early adopter of those protections.

Ever since I was young woman I have hoped to see the ERA ratified in our Federal Constitution. This has been an unfortunate stain on our country's history for almost four decades. While HJR35 is largely symbolic in nature, we should not underestimate the importance of symbolism. It sets a larger tone for a state and its people. HJR 35 is an important step forward in a larger national movement to finally achieve a Federal ERA, and I am proud to support such an effort.

Thank you again for hearing this important resolution.