



Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition Records (S0437)

Collection Number: S0437

Collection Title: Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition Records

Dates: 1973-1982

Creator: Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition

Abstract: The Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition Records document the Coalition's efforts to get the amendment ratified in the Missouri Senate. The collection contains budgets, bylaws, campaign strategies, correspondence, funding requests, local fundraising material, meeting minutes, literature from workshops and rallies, conference notices, newsletters, newspaper clippings, and papers. The bulk of the collection chronicles the Coalition's development of grassroots support from 1977-1982, in particular, canvassing activities (caravan, phone bank, house party kits, letter writing, and lobbying instructions).

Collection Size: 3 cubic feet
(113 folders, 34 photographs, 1 video tape)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research, but is offsite. The collection will need to be retrieved before viewing. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the Society all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition Records* (S0437); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by an anonymous donor on December 15, 1974 (Accession No. SA0506). An addition was made on April 28, 1977 by Jean Berg (Accession No. SA1043). An addition was made on April 27, 1982 by Margo Garvin (Accession No. SA2461).

Processed by: Updated by Garret B. Kremer-Wright, April 16, 2020

Historical Note:

In 1969, the Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition was founded as an umbrella group to coordinate the efforts of organizations supporting the amendment. These groups included the League of Women Voters, Missouri Federation of Business and Professional Women, Missouri Chapter of the Women's Political Caucus, National Organization for Women, and the St. Louis Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women.

The Coalition focused its efforts on lobbying in Jefferson City. The steering committee appointed statewide and regional coordinators to lobby and carry out the functions of the coalition as established by the executive and steering committees and to coordinate the lobbying plans of other organizations. The Coalition organized rallies in Jefferson City, wrote letters to legislators, helped in the formation of outstate coalitions, and sought endorsements from other organizations.

In 1973, Governor Christopher "Kit" Bond, was a strong supporter of the amendment and helped launch a ratification campaign. A House sub-committee headed by DeVerne Calloway held public hearings on sex discrimination in eight Missouri counties. The Senate Judiciary Committee in 1973 voted not to send the amendment to the Senate floor. Due to efforts of the Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition and Governor Bond, however, the Missouri House of Representatives passed the amendment in 1975. The amendment was defeated again in the Senate that year and suffered defeat each time it came up for a vote for the next nine years.

The Coalition monitored individual legislators and began organizing in the districts of senators who voted against the amendment. The Coalition formed a political action committee, the Missouri Citizens for Constitutional Democracy in 1975. This committee provided financial support to pro-equal rights amendment candidates for the Missouri state legislature, especially those in five districts with anti-equal rights amendment senators.

In 1976, the Coalition focused its attention primarily on fundraising activities such as "Give A Day's Pay For The ERA," wine and cheese parties, and dinner parties. One fundraising event featured actor Alan Alda. The Coalition also established "Shadow Senators" in every district to monitor the elections of the Missouri Senate.

The Coalition began developing grass roots support across the state in 1977, and for the first time it initiated a membership fee to help raise money for its activities. The Coalition enlisted the support of business and labor groups such as the Teamsters Joint Council 13, Communications Workers of America, United Auto Workers, and the Missouri State Labor Council. These groups helped with fundraising and lobbying in Jefferson City, as well as organizing and educating their own rank and file members about the amendment.

Lobbying activities included house parties, letter writing and persuasion campaigns, local fundraisers, phone banks, and canvassing. The "Show Me Equality Caravan," modeled after a successful campaign in Indiana, toured every county in Missouri, held public meetings, and provided educational materials and assistance to out-state coalitions. The phone banks increased membership, kept existing members active and rallied support of individuals and organizations. Despite such efforts, the Senate voted against the amendment by a 22 to 12 margin in 1977.

In 1978, the Coalition worked with the United Labor Policy Committee, comprised of affiliates from the AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, and the Teamsters, to develop a joint strategy for the next legislative session. It also joined the Coalition of Labor Union Women in November 1978 as co-sponsor of an "Anti-'Right To Work'- ERA Rally" prior to the defeat of the proposed "Right To Work" referendum to the Missouri Constitution.

Former Women's Political Caucus lobbyist, Pam Rich, became the Coalition's Jefferson City lobbyist in 1979. She concentrated on those legislators who might be persuaded to change their "no" votes. Coalitions such as the League of Women Voters and Missouri Women's Political Caucus began to gather lists of people who might influence legislators to vote for the Equal Rights Amendment. Also in 1979, the Teamster Joint Council 13 offered the Coalition free office space at the Teamster Council Plaza.

The 1980 election provided the last opportunity for electoral changes in the Missouri legislature before the 1982 deadline for the amendment's ratification. The Coalition failed in its efforts to remove incumbents who voted against the amendment in the Missouri Senate. In 1980 sponsors of the Equal Rights Amendment struck the amendment from the senate calendar because there were not enough supporters in the legislation.

In 1982, the Senate Constitutional Amendments Committee failed to achieve the majority vote needed to pass a ratification resolution, thus prohibiting the amendment from ever getting to the senate floor for debate. Harriett Woods, the only woman in the Missouri Senate, said to the committee, "a body dominated by men should not deny a vote on this issue, which is so significant to both men and women." The Coalition disbanded in June 1982 when the time limit for ratification was not extended. The amendment was never ratified in Missouri and fell three states shy of the necessary thirty-eight to become an amendment to the United States Constitution.

Presidents of the Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition included Barbara Harrison (1973-1974); Rosemary Smithson (1975-1976); Doris Quinn (1977-1978); Mary Ann Sedey (1978-1979); and Mary Lou Anderson (1979-1982).

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 8 series with 14 sub-series:

Administrative

Bylaws, Committee minutes, membership lists

Correspondence

Finances and fundraising

Administrative finances

Membership drive

Fundraising events

Activities

Publicity strategies

Canvassing

Legislative

Conferences, rallies, visits

Support groups

Media, Papers, Publications, Speeches

- Media
- Papers
- Publications
- Speeches

Artifacts

Photographs

Filmstrip and tape; slides

Scope and Content Note:**Administrative**

This series contains the administrative papers of the Coalition and is divided into two subseries. The first subseries contains bylaws, committee minutes, and membership lists from 1973 to 1982. The second subseries includes correspondence of Coalition presidents Doris Quinn, Mary Ann Sedey, Mary Lou Anderson as well as St. Louis coordinator Ann Boyce and Statewide coordinator Diane Delevette from 1976 to 1981. Also included in this subseries is correspondence with other states' Equal Rights Amendment Coalitions. This subseries is arranged in chronological order.

Finances and fundraising

This series consists of material relating to the finances and fundraising of the organization and is divided into three subseries. The first subseries is administrative finances which include budgets, treasurer's reports, Coalition's tax status, requests and proposals for funding, prospectus, and correspondence. This subseries is arranged alphabetically. The second subseries relates to various membership drives the Coalition sponsored from 1976 to 1981. Included in this subseries are form letters to organizations and individuals, contributions, membership dues, and volunteer phone bank instructions. This subseries is arranged alphabetically. The final subseries in this collection relates to fundraising events held by the Coalition from 1974 to 1981. This subseries contains flyers, programs, news clippings, press releases, itineraries, memos, fundraising guidelines, and correspondence. This series is arranged chronologically.

Activities

This series contains the various activities of the Coalition held from 1972 to 1982. This series has been divided into four subseries that have been arranged alphabetically within each series. The series on Publicity Strategies includes proposals for campaign strategies to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and requests for proposals. The Canvassing subseries contains correspondence, flyers, petitions, caravan, house party, and public opinion polls from 1976 to 1980. The Legislative subseries includes legislative activity of the Missouri General Assembly relating to the Equal Rights Amendment. Of interest are the voting results of the legislative body, Adult Abuse Remedies Bill, sex discrimination hearing testimonies in 1973, and Missouri House of Representative hearings on the amendment. This subseries also includes newsletters, memos, news clippings, and correspondence. The Conferences, Rallies, and Visits subseries includes material related to two conferences geared towards African Americans, People of Color Conference and Women of Color Conference that have flyers, programs, news clippings, participant lists, and press releases. Of interest in this subseries is documents relating to the visit of Judy Carter's visit to the state in 1978.

Support groups

This series contains material related to various men's and women's organizations that supported the Coalition's efforts. These included, the Missouri Citizens for Constitutional Democracy, Missouri Federation of Business and Professional Women, Missouri Men for the ERA, and Homemakers of the ERA. This series contains correspondence, flyers, news clippings, memos, newsletters, and canvassing materials. Of interest in this series are news clippings and correspondence relating to Attorney General John Ashcroft's lawsuit in 1978, against the National Organization for Women. They were boycotting states that had not ratified the amendment.

Media, papers, publications, speeches

This series contains publications and media documents relating to the Coalition's efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in Missouri. This series is divided into four subseries. The Media subseries contains editorials for radio and television, correspondence, an Equal Rights Amendment media campaign packet, the campaign against KMOX Radio correspondence, and anti-Equal Rights Amendment broadcasts, newspaper clippings from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and other statewide papers covering the years of the coalition's existence that detail the activities of the Coalition. The Papers subseries contains essays about the Equal Rights Amendment, Phyllis Schlafly, and the Women's Movement in the United States. This subseries also includes position papers of the Coalition and correspondence, publications, and papers written by Joan M. Krauskopf. The Publications subseries contains anti-Equal Rights Amendment literature and correspondence, the Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition handbook and newsletters from 1974 to 1982, and St. Louis Coalition and assorted newsletters from 1977 to 1979. The Speeches subseries includes a speech by Mary Lou Anderson entitled, "ERA in Perspective" from an unknown time. This collection is arranged alphabetically by subject.

Artifacts

This series contains bumper stickers, buttons, decals, pennants, and posters for the Missouri ERA Coalition.

Photographs

This series includes photographs and negatives of Alan Alda's visit to St. Louis in 1976 for a fundraising dinner, Judy Carter's visit in 1978, St. Charles Coalition at a rally in Jefferson City in 1978, and author Jane O'Reilly, who was part of a fundraiser in St. Louis in 1981. This series is arranged chronologically.

Filmstrips, tape, and slides

This series contains "What's All This About An ERA?" which is the filmstrip (V-46) and tape included in the House Party Kit, also contains slides for House Party Presentations. Some of the slides included in the presentation were textual posters, amendments, cartoons, salary gaps between men and women, occupations where more than half are women, and several pyramid charts.

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