

**Equal rights**

**Point of view of men should be considered**

By RICHARD HENDERSON and JOHN ZIMMERMAN

The Equal Rights Amendment to the national constitution (ERA), many times identified only with women's rights, should be looked at from a man's point of view also says the president of the Brazos Valley League of Women Voters, Doris Watson.

"A good example is social security benefits," said Watson, discussing the ERA. "Today, if a man's wife dies, he must show that she provided half of his support before he can draw on her social security account. However, a widow can draw on her husband's account without having to prove dependency. The ERA would provide that the husband could collect partial benefits on his wife's death. There is no reason why he shouldn't, if the wife has worked and accumulated an account."

Watson said inheritance laws in Texas are discriminatory against men and would be changed under the ERA. "It's interesting that in Texas, which is a common law state, if a woman dies without a will her husband can collect 100 per cent of the real estate in her name if there is a living child. If there's not a child, he's automatically disinherited. But a woman gets one-third of her husband's realty on his death, child or not. If the ERA is adopted into the Constitution, men and women will have the same rights, thereby equalizing the law for men in this area."

The ERA needs ratification by five more states to gain the approval of the three-fourths majority of the states it requires to become an amendment to the Constitution. It states that equality of rights shall not be denied because of sex. It also states that Congress will have the power to enforce, by legislation, the provisions of the ERA. This means federal laws would take precedence over state laws dealing with the same subjects. While Texas has ratified the national version, it also adopted an Equal Legal Rights Amendment into its constitution in 1972.

Watson stated that, while there is already a trend in the area, the ERA would guarantee that child custody in divorce cases is determined by which parent is the best suited to care for the child. "There would be no more automatic assumption that the mother is best for the child as there has been in the past," she said.

Under the non-discrimination law, women would benefit in many areas also, said Watson. The educational field is one example. "After 1972 it would have been impossible for a state-supported school to restrict women from attending, as A&M had until the 1960's. If the Texas Equal Legal Rights Amendment had occurred in 1952 instead of 1972, A&M would have been coeducational long ago."

Watson said that since the ratification of the national ERA by Texas there has been a surge of opposition, and she readily admits the amendment has critics.

One is Karen Calvert, an A&M student and chairman of this area's branch of the Committee to Restore Women's Rights, which opposes the ERA.

One of the bad effects of the ERA, said Calvert, is that it would legalize homosexual marriages. She said she feels this would have detrimental effects on the children, should the couple decide to adopt. Calvert stated that in Minnesota, which has an equal rights amendment in its constitution, a homosexual couple was married. They tried to adopt a child but

were turned down until a Minnesota court ruled discrimination. The couple now have a child. "This is deplorable," said Calvert. "I can't believe our nation would stoop to a thing such as this."

Calvert also said, quoting Yale Law Journal, "ERA would not permit laws which base their sex discriminatory classification on

stereotypes." This means that present seduction laws, statutory rape laws, prostitution laws would have to be rewritten. Calvert said, "I supported ERA. At that time I didn't know what it was all about."

Rodney Deschamps, local coordinator of Students for Responsible Expression, said that under ERA, Congress would have no

choice but to draft women along with men in time of war. In the past, Congress has had the power to draft women but has chosen not to. Deschamps said that women voting on ERA should consider the possibility of rape and torture of women in prisoner of war camps.

Many people believe ERA will change child custody laws, said

Deschamps. The mother doesn't automatically assume custody of the child, there are no laws stating such. ERA would have no effect on this subject, he said.

ERA has been ratified by 33 states, including Texas. Deschamps mentioned that opposition to ERA is growing. He said that most people don't know what ERA is all about. "Once the

people know what ERA really stands for, it will be defeated," he said.

Two bills are being considered by a Texas House Subcommittee. One is for a non-binding referendum on ERA. The bill is being sponsored by George Preston of Paris. The other, sponsored by Hilliard of Fort Worth, is to rescind ERA.

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**Drill team takes first in title meet**

The 35 members of the Fish Drill Team did not take their advisers to the quad yesterday, but it wasn't because they lost Saturday's state meet.

It was because the team decided to get in another day of practice before going to Tempe, Arizona, this week.

Traditionally, seven advisers are quadded after each drill team victory but their dousing date will be postponed until next week.

The freshman cadets collected 947 points out of a possible 1000 to take the Texas state title for the fourth year in a row. The University of Texas at Arlington finished second, Texas A&I third and the University of Texas was last in the four-team competition.

The Aggies took firsts in the inspection, basic drill, precision drill and second in the tandem phases of meet judging. The tandem phase is where two team members compete against duos from the other schools. A&M had a dropped weapon or else they possibly could have won that sequence of the meet also.

This was the Class of '78's first win in a drill meet after narrow losses in two previous meets.