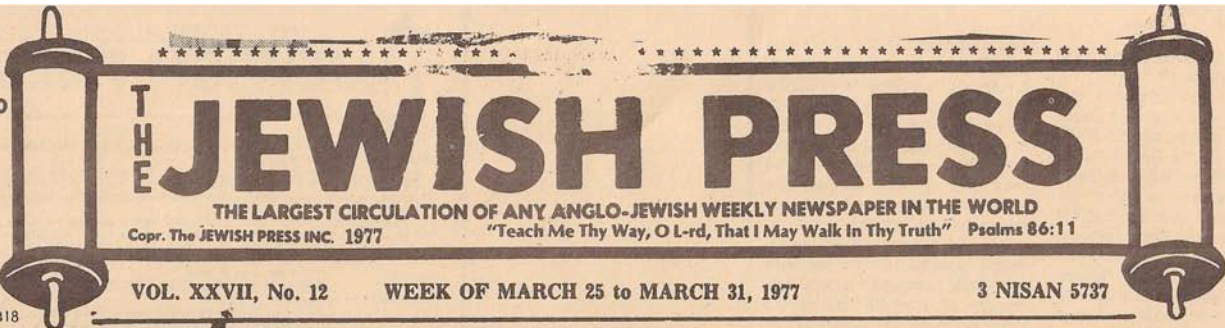


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# THE JEWISH PRESS

THE LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY ANGLO-JEWISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD  
Copr. The JEWISH PRESS INC. 1977 "Teach Me Thy Way, O L-rd, That I May Walk In Thy Truth" Psalms 86:11

VOL. XXVII, No. 12

WEEK OF MARCH 25 to MARCH 31, 1977

3 NISAN 5737

418

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"The proposed 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, while ostensibly a boon to women's rights is actually a source of grave concern to a great many citizens of both sexes.

"I believe that an honest evaluation of the facts, after eliminating the histrionics and the frivolity on both sides of the issue would lead to the following conclusions:

"1. Congress has within its powers the right to legislate against discrimination against women without a new amendment. Civil Rights legislation has been enacted without any special "minority rights" amendment.

"2. This amendment per se will not do away with job or salary discrimination since it only covers the denial or abridgement of "equality of rights under the law... by the United States or by any State on account of sex." It does

not cover the private sector. In order to rectify these situations Congress would in in any case have to pass legislation — which power it already has.

"3. The above considerations would put the amendment in the class of a status symbol for those crusading for women's rights (and it is pretty hard to beat the prestige of an amendment to the Constitution!). But there are other considerations which will put the great majority of the women of the United States squarely against the amendment. There are many laws designed to protect women whose benefits most women, if the issues were clearly explained to them, would not want to lose. Among these are woman's dower rights, the responsibility of the husband to support his wife and children, laws protecting women as workers and many others too numerous to mention, all of which will be eliminated with the stroke of the pen. How many legislators would vote against these laws if they were brought up individually for reconsideration, and not under the hypnotizing slogan of "equal rights"?

"4. Yet the one and most crucial issue which throws this amendment into the realm of bad legislation for a good cause is the question of the draft. The following is a quote from an Associated Press dispatch published on April 7, 1972:

"Coupeville, Wash. — The national director of the Selective Service System says women definitely will be drafted if the equal rights amendment to the Constitution is ratified.

"Curtis Tarr, 47, said last night there is "no question about it," but added, he does not think drafting women is a good idea."

"That this fact was fully understood by the sponsors of the amendment becomes abundantly clear from a study of the congressional record of March 21, 1972 when Senator Ervin of North Carolina tried to introduce an amendment to the "Equal Rights Amendment" which would have continued the exemption of women from compulsory military service. The opposition to this amendment was successfully lead by Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana and supported by Senator Percy of Illinois. The following is a quote from Senator Percy's remarks:

"Mr. President, I support the proposed constitutional amendment to provide equal rights for men and women as provided in House Joint Resolution 208. The

pending amendment to the resolution exempting women from the draft is one which I must vigorously oppose, however. It is, in my view, an attempt simply to defeat the basic amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing equal rights to men and women in our country. I do feel very strongly that if women want equal rights, and I believe they do, then they should have full rights as well as responsibilities. There should be no attempt to exempt them, such as is now being proposed, from military service.

"There are numerous jobs in the military service that women are highly qualified to perform and in that manner to relieve men for other jobs on the fighting front, for which they may be better qualified."

"Opposition to the women's rights amendment has tended to conjure up grisly sights of maimed corpses on the battlefield, among them women and girls. This is very glibly countered by remarks such as Mr. Percy's who would assign women other tasks in the armed forces.

"But, honorable gentlemen, we miss the whole point: What madness has overtaken us or what dire national emergency threatens to engulf us that we should force hundreds of thousands of young girls to change their lifestyle and submit to the regimentation of the armed

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forces of the United States in or out of combat duty?

"What real or imagined discrimination against women forces us to adopt an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which would forbid Congress, even if it wanted to, from exempting women from the draft? If Congress wants to draft women it can do so now should any such emergency ever arise, Heaven forbid. But under the 27th amendment, Congress would be forced to draft women whenever it had to draft men, whether they liked it or not.

"I implore you as men of reason and responsibility to resist the temptation to get on the bandwagon of a vociferous minority. It is your duty as legislators to vote for the better interests of your constituents. Do you really believe that you are enhancing your women constituent's rights. Or are you throwing away what has been universally recognized as their right — namely to be free from compulsory service which should be reserved for men, as it has been from the conception of our country until the present day.

Will your women constituents appreciate your votes when they and their daughters are being drafted?

"There is one more dimension that I should like to add on behalf of Orthodox Jews, who are a significant minority in this country. This amendment with the attendant complication of women's draft, will make our position untenable in the United States. Our whole religious commitment and life style is centered around a strong family unit and a system of education which stresses the upbringing of our daughters in a religious and moral

environment. We are not prepared to have our teen-age daughters, no matter how small a percentage they may be, forcibly removed from this atmosphere and thrown into that of an army camp where we have no control over their training or their life style. Were there some national emergency to warrant this we might at least understand the attempt at such coercion. But with the ample manpower supply in a country of over 200 million we must ask from the depths of the anguished hearts of parents, Why? For what?

"Will you force us to defy the law or resort to lengthy and expensive litigation to maintain our religious identity? Our women and women of other religious groups are also women and they do not support this amendment. By all means let us fight for women's rights but not with legislation that is poorly conceived and unfortunately constructed so as to deny the very rights we seek to guarantee."

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### Equal Rights Will Do Wrong!

The fate of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution will hinge upon a pivotal vote in key state legislatures. It therefore behooves legislators to have second thoughts on this subject before they cast their final vote.

It has already been shown that the ERA is either unnecessary or harmful. Federal and state laws are on the books already protecting women in the basic areas of employment, housing and education, so that a constitutional amendment is superfluous. At the same time, the passage of the ERA and its symbolism would strike a blow at the traditional family unit of the father and the mother role.

At this period particularly, when there has been renewed concern over the women's draft law in Israel, passage of the ERA has serious implications for the Holy Land as well. As clarified elsewhere in this issue by an Agudath Israel leader, the ERA would open the door to drafting women for army service in the U.S. if the government decides to resume conscription.

Recent newspaper reports about the possibility of resuming draft for the armed forces in this country, place strong emphasis on the fear that through the ERA we may witness the horrifying situation of women being drafted into the army because of some misguided advocates of "equal rights". Unquestionably such an eventuality would create a major problem in Israel, where the foremost rabbis have instructed the girls not to permit themselves to be drafted at any cost.

We call upon the legislators who will be faced soon with making a decision on how to vote on the Equal Rights Amendment, to reject the ERA because its negative consequences will create waves as far away as Israel.