

# House Unit OKs 3 More Yrs. for ERA

Washington (News Bureau)— To the echo of wild applause and cheering, the House Judiciary Committee voted, 19 to 15, yesterday to extend from March 22, 1979, to June 30, 1982, the deadline for ratification of the equal rights amendment. The committee recommended that Congress not allow states that have ratified the amendment to withdraw their approval.

The extension goes to the House floor, where its backers were confident of victory. Approval by the Senate is less assured.

Backers of the extension had wanted another seven years added to the seven set aside by Congress in 1972 for states to ratify the constitutional amendment to ban sex discrimination, but scaled

## House Okays Pregnancy Bias Bill

Washington (UPI) — The House yesterday passed legislation to protect pregnant workers from discrimination in employment and health benefits but tacked on a controversial antiabortion amendment. The bill was approved 376 to 43.

A similar measure was approved by the Senate in September, but without the language allowing employers to deny disability and health benefits for abortions except when the life of the mother is endangered.

The House bill makes clear that fringe benefit programs must treat women affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions the same as other employees based on their ability or inability to work.

The House and Senate measures are designed to reverse the Supreme Court decision of Dec. 7, 1976, in the case of Gilbert vs. General Electric, in which the court ruled exclusion of pregnancy from employer disability benefit plans did not constitute sex discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

down the proposal because they did not have enough votes for approval.

The amendment, which would guarantee legal equality of women, will die unless it is approved by three more states by next March 22, or unless Congress postpones that deadline. So far, 35 state legislatures have approved ERA; 38 are needed.

Several hundred women — supporters as well as opponents of the equal rights amendment—waited outside the committee room to observe the debate. Inside, a number of prominent women's rights supporters, including White House aide Midge Costanza, watched the proceedings intently from front-row seats.