

# ERA forces face trouble in Senate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Backers of a new lease on life for the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, victorious in the House Judiciary Committee, say they expect approval by the full House but that they could run into trouble in the Senate.

That was the consensus after Tuesday's 19-15 committee vote to put off the deadline for ratification of the ERA to June 30, 1984 — an extension of three years, three months and eight days.

The vote was met with wild cheering and clapping from the capacity audience, in which ERA supporters predominated. Midge Costanza, an aide to President Carter, jumped to her feet and applauded.

The ERA, which would outlaw discrimination based on sex, has been approved by 35 states. Unless the extension is approved by Congress, it must be ratified by three more by next March 22 to become part of the Constitution.

Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., the leader of the pro-extension forces on the committee, predicted the measure would win approval in the House, where it is expected to be put to a vote next month.

But other ERA supporters said the Senate subcommittee on the Constitution, to which it would be referred, looms as an obstacle.

The subcommittee was believed to be divided 3-3 on the extension issue when Sen. James Allen, D-Ala., an opponent, died. His seat on the parent Judiciary Committee has been filled by his widow, Maryan, but his subcommittee post is still vacant. A committee source said it was not known whether she would also fill the subcommittee seat.

Four of the 35 states that have ratified the measure — Kentucky, Tennessee, Idaho and Nebraska — have since rescinded approval, but the validity of that move will ultimately be up to Congress. Kentucky's action was vetoed by its acting governor, however.

Before Tuesday's final committee vote on the extension, the panel rejected an amendment to permit states that have ratified the ERA to withdraw their approval during the additional time period.

No time extension has been asked be-



—AP Photo

ERA supporters Gloria Steinham, Midge Costanza in D.C.

fore on ratification of a constitutional amendment. Until several amendments early this century, Congress put no time limit on the process, although the Constitution gives Congress the power to set such limits.

ERA backers originally sought a seven-year extension but scaled this down because they were two votes short of committee approval.

Carter's wife, Rosalynn, and former first lady Betty Ford, both ERA supporters, played what might have been key

roles in the intensive lobbying that preceded the committee vote.

Mrs. Ford called Rep. Harold Sawyer, R-Mich., and Mrs. Carter phoned Rep. Lamar Gudger, D-N.C., on behalf of the extension.

Both votes were needed. Sawyer was against the extension but agreed to vote for it if his vote was needed to send the proposal to the full House. Gudger remained publicly uncommitted until shortly before the vote. Both men voted for the extension.

**Hospital costs** — The Carter administration's bill, watered down previously from mandatory to stand-by controls on hospital costs, was gutted Tuesday when the House Commerce Committee voted 22-21 to eliminate entirely the threat of controls on the hospital industry. Instead, a powerless national commission would be set up to monitor the voluntary effort by hospitals and physicians to hold down cost increases.

**Indians** — Members, from more than 80 tribes, planned to meet today in Lafayette Park across from the White House. They have criticized President Carter for being out of the country when their protest march from California arrived in the capital on Saturday. The House adopted 337-81 a resolution declaring that national policy is to protect the rights of Indians and other native peoples "to believe, express and exercise the traditional religions...."

**Energy** — The first part of President Carter's 15-month-old energy plan, designed to conserve dwindling petroleum and natural gas supplies by forcing industries to burn more coal, awaits House action after winning lopsided Senate approval. Tuesday's 92-6 Senate approval would prohibit most new power plants from burning natural gas or petroleum and give the government the power to order certain industries to switch to coal. House leaders say they don't plan to call a vote on the measure immediately.

**Endangered species** — Legislation setting up a committee to grant exemptions under the Endangered Species Act survived twin challenges by Senate conservatives and environmentalists Tuesday, but a final vote was delayed a day. An effort by Sen. John Stennis, D-Miss., to scrap the proposed committee and permit wholesale exemptions, including one for the controversial Tellico Dam, was defeated, 76-22. A second challenge, this led by Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis. and forbidding any exemptions, was withdrawn without a vote.