

2016-2017 Contest Topic:

IS IT TIME TO PASS THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT?

The **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** was a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal rights for women. Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman originally wrote the ERA. In 1923, it was introduced in the Congress for the first time. Several attempts to ratify the amendment were made in 1972, 1978 and then a possible ratification in 1982, but it still has never been put into law.

Actress Patricia Arquette, who made headlines and brought new attention to the gender pay gap with her infamous 2015 Oscar speech has started a petition to assure the passage of ERA NOW!

"People think it's a women-only issue but it's not," Arquette told PEOPLE magazine. "It's an equality issue."

Filmmaker Kamala Lopez's new film, *Equal Means Equal*, examines the startling effects of gender inequality in the United States, the inadequacy of current laws in place and the dedicated advocates who've been fighting for decades to rectify the situation.

Directions: *Answer the questions below, in an original speech, 5-6 minutes in length delivered extemporaneously.*

Is it time to pass the Equal Rights Amendment? If so, how can this be accomplished? How can organizations such as AAUW help in getting this amendment ratified once and for all?

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