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Mary Frances Berry

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WHY ERA FAILED

POLITICS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE
AMENDING PROCESS OF THE CONSTITUTION



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Mary Frances Berry : Why ERA Failed: Politics, Womens Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution (Everywoman: Studies in History, Literature, Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether

or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Why ERA Failed: Politics, Womens Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution* (Everywoman: Studies in History, Literature, Culture):

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great resource!By HeatherThis is a great resource on the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). It focuses on what exactly the amendment was and what it was expected to accomplish. The author also focuses on the amendment process and why it failed in the United States. A great read, and a must read!

Why ERA Failed looks at the systemic problems of politics and the amending process. The author, Mary Frances Berry, considers the behavior of the two sides from the perspective of a historian and lawyer. She describes the history of the amending process, from the Constitutional Convention to the present day, and its application to the struggles for amendments concerned with the status of blacks after the Civil War, income tax, prohibition, child labor, and woman suffrage. Berry concludes that ERA approval was problematic at best and defeat predictable. Supporters did too little of what is required for ratification of a substantive proposal too late. Furthermore, the large number of state ratifications gained was deceptive. Support was eroding instead of increasing in the final stages of the campaign.

From *Library Journal*The failure of the ERA to achieve ratification could have been predicted by a careful student of history, argues Berry (History, Law, Howard Univ.), a courageous member of the Civil Rights Commission. By examining other amendment campaigns Berry shows that timing is crucial; that consensus must be built state by state before Congress votes; and that the people must be convinced of the need for the amendment. ERA proponents were slow to appreciate the difficulties, and the strength of the opposition. Berry hopes the lessons of earlier amendment campaigns will yet be useful. Her message is compelling. Unfortunately, this important book is flawed by convoluted sentences and grammatical errors. Recommended with this reservation for public and academic libraries.Mary Drake McFeely, *Smith Coll. Lib., Northampton, Mass.* Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc.