

**8116:12/83**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON THE EQUAL RIGHTS  
AMENDMENT**

Female and male were created in God's image and they are co-laborers with God as stewards of all creation. The first chapter of Genesis states, "Male and female he created them, and God blessed them . . ."

Jesus defied custom and affirmed women as equal to men. In a time when women were sequestered and tradition assigned them a limited role, Jesus saw them as made in the image of God and offered them the gift of salvation (Luke 8:1-3; Luke 10:38-42; John 4:7-42). His call to discipleship challenged women and men equally to be hearers and doers of the Word (Luke 11:28).

Women such as Pricilla, Lydia and Phoebe were leaders in the early church. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit called forth sons and daughters to proclaim God's message (Acts 2:17). The Apostle Paul declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

There is discrimination against women in every sphere of life, but it surfaces dramatically in the economic sphere of life. Studies indicate that since 1955 the gap between men's and women's pay has widened. Existing laws do not provide equal protection to women and men and vary from state to state. Many of our current laws actually embody sex discrimination, and to change them would take years. A constitutional amendment would provide a uniform base for future legislation that would assure equal rights.

**The Equal Rights Amendment states:**

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation the provision of this Article.

Section 3. This Amendment shall take effect two years after the ratification.

Historically, American Baptists have been advocates for women's equality and have affirmed the leadership gifts of women. Because of our tradition and our biblical understanding regarding the equality of women and men,

THEREFORE, be it resolved:

1. That the General Board of the American Baptist Churches reaffirms its continued support of a Constitutional Amendment providing equal rights to all;
2. That our support of the Equal Rights Amendment be communicated at appropriate times to the President and members of Congress, as well as to state governors and legislators;
3. That American Baptists, as individuals, local churches, regional and national organizations be urged to work for the enactment of the Constitutional Amendment by Congress and for its subsequent ratification in the states;
4. That Educational Ministries and National Ministries provide information, study resources and programming in support of the Equal Rights Amendment to American Baptist Churches and to related organizations.

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Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1983  
84 For, 11 Against, 4 Abstentions  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1993  
(General Board Reference # - 8116:12/83)

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## **POLICY BASE**

### **American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights**

As American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights, and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

8. The right to develop skills and abilities, to utilize these in economic, political, social, intellectual and religious institutions, and to receive a just return for one's labor;

9. The right to human dignity, to be respected and treated as a person, and to be protected against discrimination without regard to age, sex, race, class, marital status, income, national origin, legal status, culture or condition in society;

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