

Chances dim ERA will pass this year

by Sara Fritz
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Disappointed by eight defeats and only one victory this year, some proponents of the Equal Rights Amendment now concede they may not win final ratification until 1976.

The amendment, which would overturn any law that discriminates on the basis of sex, recently has been voted down on the floor of legislatures in Oklahoma, Arizona, Nevada, Georgia and Utah.

It also was defeated by a house committee in Indiana and buried by committee action in Virginia and Louisiana.

Only one state, North Dakota, has approved ERA since the start of 1975 — the year in which proponents originally predicted it would be incorporated into the U.S. Constitution. Four more legislatures must vote "yes" to provide the necessary 38 states for ratification.

Fredi Wechsler, ERA expert for the National Women's Political Caucus, said she regrets that five of the recent defeats — in Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Indiana and Georgia — occurred within the span of one year. "It's bad when it comes all at once like that," she said.

"Maybe we'll have to wait until next year. That is certainly a real possibility now. The prospect seems to be strong."

Mary Brooks, an ERA specialist for the League of Women Voters, added that five defeats in one week destroyed any possibility of a bandwagon.

"Now it's going to be push all the way," she said. "The chances just don't look as good as they did in January that it's going to be ratified this year."

But Wechsler noted that the votes in Indiana and Oklahoma were the only real disappointments, because none of the other states were considered strong possibilities.

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The leaders of a pro-ERA coalition of women's groups now are focusing their lobbying efforts in five states which still are expected to vote on the amendment this year.

Two of them, Illinois and Missouri, are understood to be leaning toward ratification of ERA. The others — North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida — are still in doubt.

The Missouri house already has ratified ERA and the senate is expected to cast its vote sometime in late March or early April. In Illinois, where neither chamber has acted this year, the senate is scheduled to vote on ERA March 4.

Committee hearings on ERA are scheduled in North Carolina and South Carolina over the next two weeks. But in Florida the legislature does not convene until April.

If ERA has not been ratified by 38 states within the next year, it will have lingered in the state legislatures longer than any other proposed constitutional amendment. And if it goes unratified until March 1979, it will die.

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Congress ready to kill oil tariff

by Steve Gerstel
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Congress, ready and willing to take on President Ford, hopes this week to junk the Administration's tax on imported oil and, at the same time, begin

moving its own economic program.

Ford is expected to veto, sometime this week, a 90-day suspension of the oil levy, setting the stage for the first showdown between the President and the heavily Democratic 94th Congress.

By all head counts, the House will hand

Labor calls for oil independence

United Press International

MIAMI BEACH — The energy crisis is here to stay as long as the United States depends on foreign oil shipped in foreign vessels from insecure sources, the AFL-CIO Executive Council said in a statement released Sunday.

In an energy policy statement, the organization said it was time to take the importation of oil out of private hands and place it in the hands of government. The

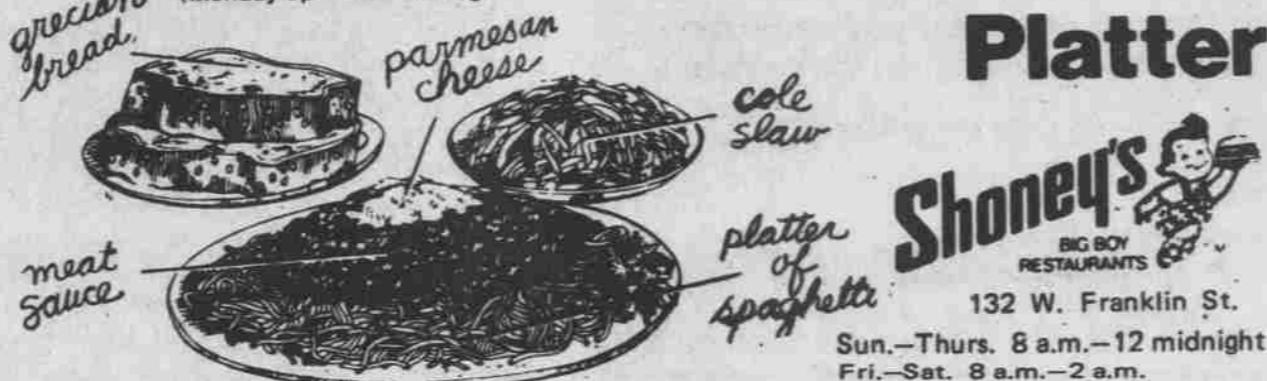
government should determine the amount of oil imported, negotiate its price and provide for its internal allocation.

"As long as the United States is dependent on the importation of oil, shipped in foreign vessels, from insecure sources, the energy crisis will remain with us," the council statement said.

The AFL-CIO called for import quotas, "including a ban on such imports originating in those countries that embargoed oil to the United States and Holland in 1973-74."

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