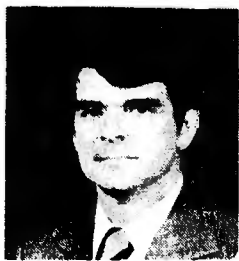


Senator

Joseph E.
Thomas

Legislative Report



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. "The Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation the provisions of this article."

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

Probably no other single piece of legislation has caused more outpouring of sentiment and emotion than the controversial Equal Rights Amendment. A short, simple, and direct amendment to our U.S. Constitution designed to guarantee equal rights for women in this country.

As most of you are aware by now, last week I decided to oppose this amendment should it come to the floor of the State Senate. I made this decision after much serious consideration and concern.

The concern was and is a result of my full support for the stated principles of the first section of the amendment. Too often in the past, our women have been discriminated against in job placement, job advancement, and of course, salary. And job environment is only one area of many in which our women have suffered blatant discrimination. Problems still exist in areas such as mortgage lending and education.

My decision to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment should not be interpreted to mean that I am turning my back on such serious problems.

Rather, my decision means that I will be even more diligent in addressing these same problems. Fortunately, legislation already exists which can help us to combat the various areas where discrimination still lives, but we must work harder to see that this legislation is followed.

I made my decision to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment partly because of this existing legislation and for several other reasons.

The basic flaw in this amendment (and its attractiveness to many) is its short simplicity. Because of this simplicity, it is by definition vague and open to various interpretations. Interpretations which would come, not from the state or local level, but from the federal government in Washington.

However, enforcement of these interpretations is not vague. Section 2 of the amendment expressly gives this power to the federal government.

I do not believe the bureaucrats in Washington should be given even greater opportunities for interpretation, influence, control, enforcement, or interference in our personal lives.

Further, I do not believe the Constitution should be altered until we have some idea of the possible results. With this in mind, I will be studying closely the state equal rights legislation now on the books in Colorado and Pennsylvania since the ERA issue is almost certain to return to North Carolina in the future.

But the most practical reason for my opposition is the overwhelming sentiment expressed by the voters of the Second Senatorial District. Seventy-two percent of the people who expressed their feelings to me on ERA were against the proposed amendment.

Because a majority of my colleagues in the State Senate had feelings and constituents similar to mine about ERA, the amendment died in Committee last week. All of us realized that a vote either way would alienate a large number of constituents.

Certainly, the Equal Rights Amendment is an issue where there are no absolutes. No one can be absolutely sure whether he or she is right or wrong when there are so many legitimate arguments for both sides.

We can only hope that a mutual respect can be maintained by opponents and supports of this historical issue.

Registration Extended

Raleigh-North Carolina motor vehicle owners will have additional time to purchase 1979 license plates and stickers as a result of legislation passed by the General Assembly last week. The legislature extended the deadline from February 15 to February 28.

Elbert L. Peters, Jr., Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, noted at a news conference on February 14 that over a million vehicles in the state were not registered as of Tuesday February 13. The recent snow and ice storms were cited as reasons for the extension.

Leave a real legacy: Conserve energy

What better legacy to leave future generations, than the resources to build a better world?

Even though it felt like spring for a few days last week, the weatherman tells us that we still have several weeks of cold weather ahead. And then, all too soon, comes the long, hot months of summer. By now everybody is aware of the problems with depleting supplies of energy resources. We all must learn to conserve, whenever possible. However, with the rising cost of heating and cooling our homes, conserving energy becomes not only an environmental problem but an economic one as well.

Jim Holton, Agricultural Extension Agent, presented a program on "How to Save

Connie Bryan

Energy and \$\$\$...at Home" to the Vance Home Extension Club at their meeting on February 12. I thought our readers would be interested in some of his helpful hints.

To protect your home from outside heat and cold - find out if your home needs insulation; caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows; install storm windows; and keep your fireplace damper closed unless you have a fire going.

To save heating energy - lower your thermostat to 65° during the day and 55° at night; have your oil furnace serviced at least once a year; clean or

replace the filter in your forced-air heating system each month; and wear warmer clothing.

To save cooling energy - select the smallest and least powerful air-conditioning system that will cool your home adequately; make sure the ducts in your central air-conditioning system are properly insulated; install a whole house ventilating fan in your attic or in an upstairs window, even if you have central air-conditioning; set your thermostat at 78°; clean or replace filters at least once a month; use heat-generating appliances (ovens, dishwashers, dryers, etc) in the early morning and late evening hours whenever possible.

To save energy around the house - repair leaky

faucets promptly; do as much household cleaning as possible with cold water; check the temperature on your water heater (a setting of 120° can provide adequate hot water for most families); use small electric pans or ovens for small meals; let your dishes in your dishwasher air dry; wash clothes in warm or cold water, rinse in cold; fill clothes dryer, but do not overload them; use the old-fashioned clothesline; take showers rather than tub baths; use one large bulb instead of several small ones in areas where bright light is needed; turn three-way bulb to the lowest level when watching television; and use fluorescent lights whenever you

See Conserve, Page 11

The Washington Report

by
Rep. Walter B. Jones

Recently the USDA announced that for the coming season the tobacco warehouse sales would be extended from the present four-day to a five-day week. This tentative decision would reduce from 66 to 56 the total number of sets of graders. I know of no decision regarding tobacco which has brought about such solid, adamant opposition from farmers, warehousemen, farm organizations and the manufacturers themselves. As a result, the House Subcommittee on Tobacco, of which I serve as Chairman, held hearing in Thursday, February 15, and we believe that we created a record which might convince the Administration that this is indeed an unwise decision. Some ten years ago when the five-day week selling period was in effect, it caused multiple holidays in order to allow the purchaser of the tobacco to remove their product from the warehouse floor. And so, after going to a four-day selling period, the fifth day which is, of course, Friday, is used for clearing out purposes. And since this has been in effect, there have been few if any, so-called "holidays", and for ten years the warehouse system has worked efficiently and most satisfactorily for all concerned. One detrimental feature of the "holiday" is that invariably after the sales are resumed, the farmer receives a much

Circulation increasing

The West Craven Highlights is now well into its second year of publication. This means that several subscriptions are up for renewal. As publisher, I am pleased to report that almost all who subscribed to the Highlights back last January when it was a fledgling, little eight page tabloid trying to get on its feet, have renewed their subscriptions for another year. In addition, a great many new subscribers have joined the Highlights family.

During its first year, the Highlights has grown from eight to twelve pages. It offers more coverage of local news, not only from Vanceboro but also from surrounding communities of Ernul, Askin, Epworth, Jasper, Cove City, Ft. Barnwell, New Bern, Spring Garden, Dover, Clay Roots, and Wilmar. Through the pages of the Highlights, readers have been acquainted and re-acquainted with interesting citizens in the area. Recent improvements include the addition of a full-time news editor, Connie Bryan, and the addition of a family page which each week carries puzzles, cartoons, and family articles. Many citizens have welcomed the inclusion of the editorial page. The editorial page offers readers information about topics of concern in nation, state, and local government. It also offers readers an opportunity to give their views on issues affecting them.

The staff of the Highlights is pleased to be in the business of serving such a large group of families in Craven County and beyond. We appreciate your support and pledge to do our best to give you quality news and feature coverage in your area. We are proud to be your local newspaper.

lower price per pound than he was receiving prior to the holiday.

Most important, this entire reduction in personnel would amount to \$215,000 per year. One of the major tobacco companies submitted testimony that this fifth day, as well as weekend overtime, that estimates show this would cost them in excess of \$260,000 per year, and for all domestic tobacco companies, the increased cost is estimated to be \$1,040,000. These costs, when deducted as operating expense for income tax purposes, would result in a federal tax loss of \$478,400 in 1979. At the conclusion of the Subcommittee hearing, by a unanimous vote, the Committee passed a resolution urging the USDA to reconsider their position, and for the 1979 selling season to retain the four-day selling week.

Actual legislative action continues to move slowly, with House sessions almost non-existent. This, of course, is due to the Committees not being able to report out bills this early in the session. This does not mean the Congressional officers are idle, for the personal service and legislative inquiries seem to increase each and every day.

Also, as mentioned last week, the House Committee on Agriculture met each morning to take testimony from the American Agricultural Movement members. These Sessions were very orderly and the whole question to be decided is whether it is in the best interest of the total economy to provide 90% of parity for certain crops which is permissible under the present law subject to the decision of the Secretary of Agriculture. One of the witnesses was a lady from South Carolina who testified that the farm that they owned has been in their family for four generations and for the first time in history, there is now a mortgage on said property. She, of course, attributed this to the below cost of production they are receiving for certain commodities. For an example, she said that the cost of producing corn is approximately \$3 per bushel, while the present price for corn is \$2.50. As stated before, I am sure that most Members of Congress will do whatever is reasonable to try to save the American farm families.

The West Craven

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