

ERA . . . the Senate Scene, the Vote

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When debate on the state's Equal Rights Amendment opened in the state Senate Wednesday,



POWERS

May 21, women were everywhere. Lt. Gov. Mary Ann Krupsack stood at the dais at the front of the chamber. The state's three women senators huddled together behind desks piled with manila envelopes and law books. Guest seats on both sides of the aisle were filled with woman who had lobbied for or against the bill. In the galleries women outnumbered men, some laden with buttons, literature and baked goods. One side wall of the chamber was pressed with woman staffers of the Senate.

Even the chaplain was a

woman. Amy Claud Casey, sister of Sen. Robert Garcia prayed, "Lord, we have no intention to stand taller or bigger but Lord give us the opportunity to walk side by side with our brothers."

Debate opened with Sen. Linda Winiok, the amendment's sponsor, explaining it. She called upon another woman senator, Karen Burstein, an expert on laws relating to women, to answer some of the most asked questions about the amendment. Their presentation obviously was planned, the two began questioning and answering one another to a background of Snickers from a few senators. Several times they were interrupted with points of order which the chair ruled "not well taken." A few senators tried to break into their presentation with questions of their own, but the two senators persisted, covering such topics as the draft, Social Security, divorce, alimony, support and homosexual marriages.

Sen. Fred Eckert, of Greece presented an amendment to the main amendment which would allow those "classifications based on gender which have a compelling justification." He said he was offering this rider because he feared the interpretation of the broad language of the main amendment.

Sen. Richard Schermerhorn said he feared ERA will mean his daughters will be drafted. The women senators became agitated. One called for a point of order to be sure the Senate was discussing the state Equal Rights Amendment and not the federal one. Yes, the state one, said Mrs. Krupsack, returning the floor to Sen. Schermerhorn who talked about the federal one anyway.

Other senators spoke. Among them were Sen. John Marchi, Sen. John Perry, Sen. James James Donovan, Sen. Manfred Orhenstein. Sen. Eckert spoke again. He closed debate and asked for a slow roll call.

It began. Anderson? No. Visitors were compiling votes as fast as the clerk could read them. Donovan? Done? Eckert? Yes. No. Yes. The room was quiet. Outside bells were ringing to bring back stray senators. It took a few moments to compile the vote but in the end the amendment to the amendment was defeated, 42-16. It was 7:30.

Even though the vote on the

On November Ballot

Albany [RNS] — New York State's Senate has given final approval to an equal rights amendment to the State Constitution. The vote, 44 to 14, followed an intense three-hour debate.

The measure, which will be put before the voters in a November referendum, is similar to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Supporters of the New York amendment describe it as a

ERA had not yet been taken and wouldn't be for several more hours, the room started to clear. Sen. Lewis asked to give his vote and to go home. So did a dozen other senators. More than half the reporters took off. Those senators who wanted to speak on the ERA for the record remained for two more hours until all the talk was finished and the final tally was taken: ERA passed, 44-14.

statement of legal principle outlawing discrimination on the basis of sex. It reads:

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the State of New York or any subdivision thereof on account of sex."

Legislative action on the state's equal rights bill was the second step of the constitutional amendment process, which requires the approval of two consecutive Legislatures and the voters.



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