

# Anti-ERA Leader Speaks at St. Pius

By MARTIN TOOMBS

The Equal Rights Amendment offers no advantages to women and would have many unwanted effects on society, according to Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly, a nationally known ERA opponent who spoke before 140 people at St. Pius X Church on Oct. 19.

The Equal Rights Amendment, which states that "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" will be an item on the ballot Nov. 4. If the voters approve, it will become an amendment to the New York State Constitution.

Mrs. Schlafly is an active commentator, who contributes twice each week to CBS Radio's "Spectrum," writes a bi-weekly newspaper column, and publishes her own monthly newsletter. A graduate with honors from Washington University in St. Louis and of Harvard's Master's program in Political Science, she has become the primary spokesman for the anti-ERA groups. She is the national chairman for STOP ERA, an affiliate of Operation Wake-up, which was the sponsoring group for her appearance here.

Mrs. Schlafly responded to the following questions in an exclusive interview taped before her speech.

**Q:** Passage of the Federal ERA would require women to be included in any future military draft. Do you object to this?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** The majority of American people feel that we are better defended in battle by men. And I cannot believe that anybody would want coed combat units unless they want us to lose and want to destroy the military.

**Q:** Shouldn't men and women have the same requirements for enlistment into the military?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** The only difference is that women are required to have a high school education and we certainly don't want to take into the military some female high school dropouts.

**Q:** Isn't it possible that the courts will rule that homosexual marriages will remain illegal?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** Yes, it is theoretically possible that the courts would hold that ERA does not legalize homosexual marriages; that is a possibility. I think four out of five lawyers say that homosexual marriages will be legalized under ERA. Because if you want to deny a marriage license to a man and a man, it is precisely on account of sex that you want to deny it. I fully concede that it is possible that might not happen because who knows what the courts may do. But why transfer the authority for that decision out of the hands of the state legislature and city councils up to the courts?

**Q:** What do you see as the major effect if the ERA is passed?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** The major destructive effect is on the marriage; it invalidates the laws that say the husband must support his wife and support their minor children. A wife deserves the right to be a fulltime homemaker, and that's what we have under the law today and that is what the ERA will take away from her.

**Q:** Are you saying that women who could work will be forced out of the home to jobs?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** Well, I think that is the ultimate result. What you have done under ERA is put the wife where she has to beg and plead with her husband to support her where today it is her legal right.

**Q:** Why should a woman need a law to force her husband into supporting her?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** Because that is what the marriage contract is and I believe that duty is an honorable word, and when you go into marriage there are certain duties that you assume, and one of those duties is that the husband has the financial obligation to support the wife. I think that's an honorable thing and I think a man should know that when he gets married. Most people do fulfill their duty without having the law coming around to say they have to, because they understand that. I think it is a terrible thing for our country and for future marriages to proclaim that no longer is this what the marriage contract means because the wife has equal obligation. And no way is this an advance for women.

**Q:** Could you understand men being in favor of ERA for the reasons you say women should be against it?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** Only if he is a man who wants to get out of his obligations. If he is a man who is bitter about making support payments to his wife, I can't convince him. But the family men, I do believe, recognize their role as the role of provider. I think it's a very great damage to the man to take that role away from him. Most people who work do not go into jobs that are intrinsically self-fulfilling. Most people work just to get the money and that's how they pay their expenses to live. What satisfaction does the guy get who goes to work and puts in his forty hours on the assembly line and comes home. He has no fulfillment from his job; the self-fulfillment he has is in his role of provider.

**Q:** What about the wife who would rather work than stay home with the children?

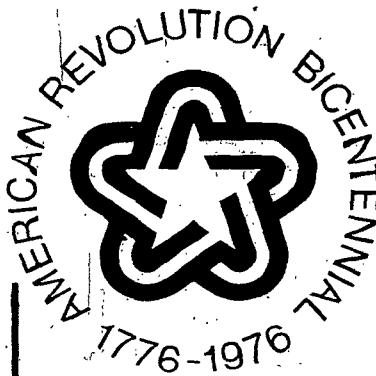
**Mrs. Schlafly:** I think we have to recognize that the responsibility for the care of babies is on the parents. And one of the possible results of ERA is to shift the primary responsibility for taking care of the children onto the government in order to give these mothers their opportunity to go out into the work force and I think that's wrong. If you're going to bring children into the world you have the responsibility to look after them.

**Q:** What about the parents who can't or won't take care of their children?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** It is still their problem; if they brought children into the world they should look after them. If a mother has to work there are all kinds of ways to work it out. The Ohio governor set up an official state task force to study the effect of ERA on Ohio state law. One of their conclusions was that there is a terrible burden on mothers responsible for the care of their children and in order to remove this burden from women it becomes the responsibility of the state to set up day-care centers in order to allow these women to go out and fulfill themselves somewhere else. I cite this as an example of the mischief they plan on using ERA to accomplish. It's really unreal what they're planning to get out of those simple words, and we know it from what they are doing.

**Q:** Should the divorce laws we now have be changed to make it possible for the woman to pay alimony to the man?

**Mrs. Schlafly:** In a big majority of the cases it's the man who wants out of the marriage. I think we live in a society that believes in the enforceability of contracts. And to get out of a contract you have to pay the price. And I think men should have to pay the price.



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Nov. 5, 1775 — George Washington, Commander in Chief, forbids the celebration of "Pope Day" in the Continental Army. In the American colonies anti-Catholicism was strong. Indeed, many joined the army against Britain because they opposed her granting religious liberty to Catholic Canada.

But as time went on, America sought the alliance of Catholic Canadians (though unsuccessfully); and (successfully) the alliance of Catholic France and Spain. Americans gradually came to see that Catholics were not bogey men. All along, the American leaders had been more open on this question.

One illustration was the action George Washington took in 1775, to prevent the burning of an effigy of the pope. This was an anti-Catholic British custom dating from the arrest in London, on Nov. 5, 1605, of Guy Fawkes, madcap Catholic watchman over the gunpowder barrels with which Catholic extremists planned to blow up king and parliament.

As Washington said, this celebration was a "ridiculous and childish custom." Anti-Catholicism would still have a long history thereafter, but the common sense of non-Catholic Americans like Washington would finally neutralize it.

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