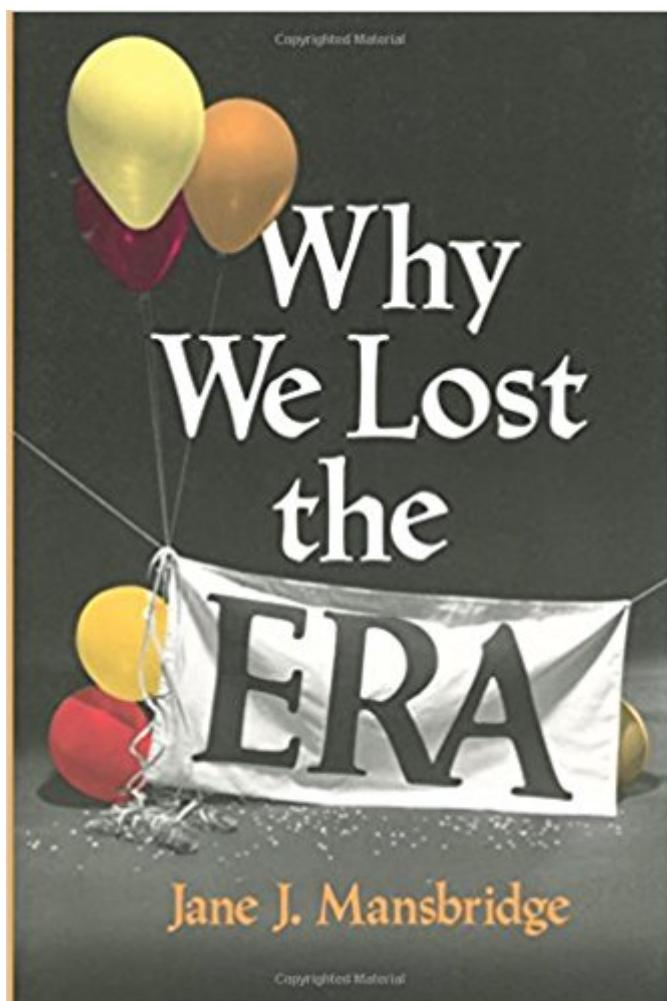


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Why We Lost The ERA (Equal Rights Movement)



Synopsis

From the Back Cover: In this work, Jane Mansbridge's fresh insights uncover a significant democratic irony - the development of self-defeating, contradictory forces within a democratic movement in the course of its struggle to promote its version of the common good. Mansbridge's book is absolutely essential reading for anyone interested in democratic theory and practice. "About this title" may belong to another edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

ERA, Mansbridge believes, would have brought little direct change, but its influence on attitudes and on state legislation would have been substantial. Examining the ideologies and strategies of supporters and opponents, Mansbridge's thorough study views the campaign as a case study of voluntary organizations. She finds that both those who worked for and against ERA adopted strong interpretations of its effects both to justify the efforts of volunteers and to inspire them. The clear, perceptive text is amplified by tables and informative notes. Mansbridge's social scientist's analysis pairs well with the historical perspective of Mary Frances Berry's Why ERA Failed (LJ 9/1/86).

Recommended for public and academic libraries. Mary Drake McFeely, Univ. of Georgia Lib., Athens

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development of self-defeating, contradictory forces within a democratic movement in the course of its struggle to promote its version of the common good. Mansbridge's book is absolutely essential reading for anyone interested in democratic theory and practice.

The writing was not as compelling as it could have been, but combines the experience of someone who worked on ERA so had a personal feeling for it with a fairly detailed legal and organizational critique of the different factors in place. It is kind of a trip now to see how many factors that were areas of concern are in place now anyway, but there are certainly still limits to equal protection.

Great informative book on the history of the ERA and why it failed to pass. Should be required reading for all!

I give this book five stars not because I agree with Mansbridge and the feminists (I strongly disagree), but because of the information contained in the book. Written in the late 80s, this book is 100% relevant to women today. This book finely showcases the absolute stupidity of the modern feminist movement. Though Mansbridge does state her opinion quite clearly in the book, she does attempt to keep it neutral when discussing the pros and cons of the ERA. She conveniently tells her readers to go ahead and skip to page such and such twice in the book (probably so her female audience wouldn't read about how badly feminism has actually screwed them over- I didn't skip ahead but read the entire thing). She goes on for nearly two hundred pages about all the ways in which the ERA could be interpreted to hurt women and goes into detail about past Supreme Court decisions that could (could being the key word here) effect how the ERA would be interpreted. Pretty much, it would offer no benefit to women the only reason the feminists wanted it was because of what it symbolized (a societal affirmation of the feminist perspective). Never mind that the amendment itself doesn't even mention women. All it would have done is invalidate all laws that protected and favored women (alimony, child custody, child support, statutory rape, different treatment of unwed mothers and fathers, the draft, combat service, etc...). ERA or not, feminists have continuously gotten it their way, which she mentions in the book. Some experts from the book: "From the beginning, 'equal rights' meant ending special benefits. An ERA would have made unconstitutional the protective legislation that socialists and social reformers like Florence Kelley, frustrated by the lack of a strong working-class movement in America, had struggled to erect in order to protect at least women and children from the worst ravages of capitalism...Nonetheless, the ERA never came close to passing until 1950 and 1953, when the U.S. Senate passed it, but with the

`Hayden rider,' which provided that the Amendment `shall not be construed to impair any rights, benefits, or exemptions now or hereinafter conferred by law upon persons of the female sex.' In both years the House of Representatives recessed without a vote. Because the women's organizations supporting the ERA knew that special benefits were incompatible with equal rights, they had tried to block the amended ERA in the House and were relieved when their efforts succeeded. ""The Supreme Court's extension of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to include women meant that by 1982 the Court had declared unconstitutional, either directly or presumptively, almost all the laws that proponents in the 1972 Congressional debates had said the ERA would change. The major exceptions were all-male draft registration, which because of the ERA's legislative history would almost certainly have been declared unconstitutional if the ERA had been ratified, and certain laws designed to benefit women rather than men."

(87)"From the very beginning of the modern women's movement in the mid-1960s, feminists had been ideologically opposed to, or at best ambivalent about, homemaking as a full time career. NOW's founding statement of purpose, in 1966, stated: 'We believe that a true partnerships between the sexes demands a different concept of marriage, an equitable sharing of the responsibilities of home and children and of the economic burdens of their support.' While NOW's word 'equitable' was not nearly as strong as the more radical groups' demands for 'equal' sharing, NOW's 'different concept' of marriage still implied an androgynous division of labor, in which men took half the responsibility for child care and housework and women took half the responsibility for bringing in money. This position became not just an implication but an article of faith for later feminists.....The very existence of full-time homemakers was incompatible with many goals of the women's movement, like the equal sharing of political and economic power. Women can never hold half the economically and politically powerful positions in the country if a greater proportion of women than men withdraw from competition for those positions. More important, if even 10 percent of American women remain full-time homemakers, this will reinforce traditional views of what women ought to do and encourage other women to become full-time homemakers at least while their children are very young...Thus the more full-time homemakers there are, the harder it will be to break traditional expectations that homemaking ought to be a woman's career. This means that no matter how any individual feminist might feel about child care and housework, the movement as a whole had reasons to discourage full-time homemaking." (99-100)"The typical NOW member had not been born in Illinois and did not necessarily expect to spend her life there. In my local NOW chapter, many of the members were recent migrants to the city, at least half were under forty, several were lesbians, and many were unmarried. " (169)"Pro-ERA marches and demonstrations also provided

important opportunities for autonomous action. In the early days of the ERA struggle, pro-ERA demonstrations were open to all. As a consequence, almost every demonstration had a socialist and a lesbian contingent, with banners proclaiming their identities as well as their support for the ERA. After considerable debate, NOW decided not to allow socialist and lesbian banners in its ERA demonstrations. While many disagreed with this decision, it was explicit and relatively participatory." (131)"From the point of view of the movement as a whole, each organization, as well as each individual, was also an autonomous actor...Now could not keep the president and vice-president of ERA Illinois from attending a Republican fund-raising dinner. ERA Illinois could not keep NOW from calling a demonstration in the last days of the legislative session." (131)"During this moratorium, feminists will need to discuss what would be best for all women in the realms of combat, school athletics, prisons, and sex-blind legislation generally. Since about 1980, as more women have experienced the results of gender-neutral legislation like no-fault divorce and joint custody, some feminists have begun to articulate a critique of egalitarianism that looks much like Marx's critique of bourgeois equality. They argue that in a society where one group holds most of the power, 'neutral' laws usually benefit the powerful group. From this perspective, a constitutional amendment that bars women from using their electoral majority and moral leverage to pass laws explicitly redressing the traditional balance of power may actually help maintain male supremacy. Although the ERA's direct legal mandate for gender neutrality would probably have been balanced by its indirect political mandate for legislation and judicial interpretations that benefited women, its defeat still raises, in a different form, the questions that Florence Kelley raised in the 1920s. An open discussion of these issues among feminists would probably make some feminists more aware of the concerns that motivated mainstream legislators to vote against the ERA." (197)

It's so sharp. I cut myself the first time I used it. low price and high quality. good memory. the speed is so amazing. send it to my teacher as a gift,

This is a good book about the Equal Rights Amendment. It's easy to read and the author focuses on the opposition to the amendment as well as the groups that support it. It gives a good overview of the amendment and why it failed.

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