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STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) IN THE SENATE IN SUPPORT
OF EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT FOR WOMEN, APRIL 4, 1957.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I think it is time we started to pay some attention to a majority in this country/which for more than fifty years/has been requesting equal rights under the Constitution. For more than fifty years/this majority has been slighted and refused.

The majority of which I am speaking/is the women of America. According to the 1950 Census, women outnumber men by about 1,030,000. Yet despite their very clear position of numerical superiority, women remain in many aspects/under the degrading letter and spirit of an English common law/which placed them on a decidedly inferior legal level. The women of America deserve equal rights. That is why I am co-sponsoring the Equal Rights Amendment.

The part that women have played in the development of this country is well known. From the earliest days of the determined Puritan mothers and the gracious plantation homemakers, through the dramatic saga of the pioneer women accompanying their men across a continent, to the present industrial age when we have over 20,000,000 women employed, American women have shared equally in the work and hardships of their fathers, husbands, and brothers. Women have not flinched before staggering tasks.

In my own state of South Carolina, we have claimed and still do claim many women who have played outstanding roles in many fields. In the field of arts, our State has been distinguished as the home of "America's First Woman Artist," Henrietta Johnson. This tradition has been upheld more recently by Alice Heyward Taylor, noted for

her designs in textiles; by Elizabeth O'Neill Verner, noted for her etchings; and by Alice R. Huger Smith, noted for her brilliant watercolors. Grace Annette DuPre, the painter, has painted the portrait of a President, Supreme Court Justices, Secretaries of State, and many other outstanding and prominent persons.

We are proud too of our female composers and singers, of Lucy Strickland for her songs of the South and of the Orient, of Clara Louise Kellogg for her operatic renown in Europe and America during the Reconstruction era.

In the field of literature, we also owe^a debt to our womenfolk. Julia Peterkin has won a Pulitzer prize for her fine book, Scarlet Sister Mary. Susan Petigru King's Nineteenth Century satires are still a delight for many, and Julia Baker's quaint Beaufort verse recalls forgotten days. Frances Guignard Gibbes' dramatic work has been produced by several professional groups within the last decade.

But the talents of South Carolina women have not been limited to the arts. In fact, far from it, for our native daughters have shown themselves possessed of courage and initiative that their men might well envy. During the Revolutionary War, Emily Geiger is said to have outwitted the Tories and delivered messages to General Sumter across Wateree Swamp. The women of South Carolina have proved that they possess ability, courage and determination, as well as charm.

South Carolina also claims Mary Putnam Gridley, who in 1889 was probably the first woman mill president in the United States. For 25 years she successfully operated the plant bequeathed to her by her grandfather.

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In the field of agriculture/Eliza Lou Pinckney is given credit for starting the cultivation of indigo, when as a girl of 16 she was left in charge of her invalid mother and three plantations.

Today our women are making a contribution that has received nationwide recognition in the fields of health, education, and, above all, in welfare. In this area, which is perhaps pre-eminently suited to bring forth the greatest female talents, we are proud to claim Miss Isabella Martin, who founded the world's first "Wayside Hospital" in Columbia in 1861.

Mother Dora Dee Walker, who introduced pimento raising in this country, was one of the first home demonstration agents. She did much to beautify the grounds, parks, and highways of our state. Mrs. Marie Cromer Siegler was one of the originators of the 4-H movement. Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham/is responsible for purchasing George Washington's home at Mount Vernon/and maintaining it as a national shrine and beauty spot.

Dr. Wil Lou Gray has devoted her time and help to the under-privileged/through the State Department of Education/by establishing the Opportunity School near Columbia, South Carolina.

Hortense Woodson is author of Giant in the Land and other books. Mrs. Mamie Norris Tillman is a leader in public affairs, temperance, and historical research. Mrs. Florence Adams Mims was an author and a leader in temperance and civic affairs.

These are but a few of the women who are famous South Carolinians. I know that we are not unique in claiming such a large number of praiseworthy women leaders. All over America women have come to occupy positions of responsibility and authority. There are 314

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women in the State legislatures. There have been at least two in the South Carolina Legislature. Sixteen outstanding women are members of the United States Congress.

What greater tribute can we offer to these busy and constructive citizens/ than to guarantee them equal rights/ by constitutional amendment.

I said in my Inaugural Address as Governor of South Carolina in 1947, and I have said many other times, that I believe in equal rights for women. Women should be encouraged to serve their communities in voluntary, paid, appointed, and elected positions. Women should receive equal pay for equal work. No woman who is able to do a man's work/ should have to accept pay below a man's level.

Women should be permitted to own property, run businesses, assume guardianships, establish separate domiciles, control their share of property held jointly with their husbands, and serve on juries throughout this whole country.

Wherever women have entered politics and public affairs, their influence has been wholesome. There is no longer any reason for women to be penalized by laws/ that were written in the horse and buggy days. The women of all the States/ should have equal rights with men. No State should put barriers in their way/ to handicap them.

This is a field where we have no reason to hesitate. I hope every member of the Senate will support the Equal Rights Amendment, of which I am happy to be a co-sponsor. Equal rights for women should be written securely into the Constitution. It is small recognition indeed/ for the contribution which our women have rendered to the Nation in the past. I know they will continue to render great service/ with the same untiring devotion in the future.