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Women's rights measure killed on Senate floor

Salem, OR – Senate Republicans attempted to pry loose Senate Joint Resolution 24 from committee before the final gavel on Monday, a measure asking voters to protect the rights of women in the Oregon Constitution with a simple Equal Rights Amendment. In a callous show of partisanship, Democrats defeated the motion to withdraw on party lines.

“It is shameful that in our modern and progressive society, such a simple and profound protection would be blocked,” said Senator Betsy Close (R-Albany/Corvallis). “This measure would have taken a stand against prejudice and discrimination and clarified the equal role women play in our world. It should have flown through the legislative process and been put before the voters for their overwhelming approval.”

SJR 24 proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution. The amendment would state that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the State of Oregon or by any political subdivision in this state on account of sex.”

Eighty percent of Oregonians support the measure, 48 legislators have signed on to the bill, and 22 other states have passed similar legislation.

“When it comes to equality, Oregon’s Constitution reflects a time when women could not vote, could not own property, could not work at the same jobs as men,” said Close. “This type of backwards thinking has no place in our society.”

Republicans believe that a women’s right to equality should be expressed and secured in the Oregon constitution, where they can be permanently protected.

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