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## CENTURY-LONG BATTLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY COMES FULL CIRCLE IN “RATIFIED,” PREMIERING ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON OCTOBER 20

*“Ratified” Chronicles a Landmark Victory as the Fight to Legalize Gender Equality in America Reaches a Turning Point in Virginia*

(San Francisco, CA) September 4, 2025—A revealing look at the grassroots organizing and legislative maneuvering that helped make Virginia the pivotal 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), “Ratified” will premiere on INDEPENDENT LENS on October 20, 2025. The documentary feature traces the women-led legal, political, and deeply personal fight to enshrine gender equality in the U.S. Constitution nearly a century after the ERA was first proposed, and over 50 years since the House of Representatives and Senate both passed it.

“Ratified” chronicles the campaign to make Virginia the 38th state to ratify the amendment, which is the number of states required to have an amendment added to the Constitution after congressional approval. The film follows organizing efforts as a cross-party coalition confronts entrenched political power. Virginia state Senator Jennifer McClellan and state Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy push through legislative barriers, along with a non-partisan grassroots team led by organizer Kati Hornung.

This political battle reveals racial and economic divisions, along with the ways women’s rights have been used as political leverage. Black women have often been overlooked in legal discussions since the creation of the Constitution, yet efforts led by Black women beginning in 2017 helped reignite momentum for the ERA’s passage after the fight stalled in the early 1980s. With the support of a multiracial, multigenerational collective of activists, an intersectional movement for gender equality emerged.

The Equal Rights Amendment was introduced as a U.S. constitutional amendment in 1924, an era when women had few legal rights and were often considered subordinate to their husbands. After decades of advocacy, the ERA finally passed both houses of Congress in 1972. However, it faced a deadline for ratification by three-fourths of the states. Despite a wave of

support in the 1970s, the amendment fell just short of the required number of state ratifications by the original 1982 deadline.

Efforts to revive and ratify the ERA have continued into the present day, but legal equality for all genders has still not been formally enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. Despite some strides, disparities remain in pay, healthcare, and legal protections. The ERA would embed protection from gender-based discrimination and enshrine bodily autonomy in the Constitution.

"Ratified" premieres on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on October 20, 2025, at 10 p.m. ([check local listings](#)). The film will also be available to stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS YouTube](#).

Visit the "[Ratified](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

#### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

##### **Sabaah Folayan, Director**

Sabaah Folayan is an award-winning storyteller who uses written and visual media to bring a fresh perspective to urgent questions of our time. She made her directorial debut at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival with "Whose Streets?", which chronicles the experiences of activists living in Ferguson, Missouri, when Michael Brown Jr. was killed.

##### **Deborah Riley Draper, Director**

Deborah Riley Draper is an award-winning filmmaker known for her compelling storytelling and ability to amplify diverse voices and journeys. A 2025 Film Independent Episodic Directing Fellow, she also received a 2025 NAACP Image Awards nomination for Outstanding Directing - Documentary for the docuseries "James Brown: Say It Loud."

##### **Emily Best, Producer**

Emily Best is a filmmaker and entrepreneur who founded Seed&Spark, the No. 1 crowdfunding platform for artists and storytellers in the world. She built a national education program in partnership with more than 700 arts and academic organizations. She has produced shorts, features, virtual reality, webseries, and comedy specials.

**Megan Goedewaagen, Producer**

Megan Goedewaagen is a producer and production executive who works across documentary, narrative, and live production. Her credits include "Pride," the FX docuseries on the history of the LGBTQ movement, "Dear Zoe," starring Sadie Sink, and "The Academy Awards," where she works as talent relations producer for the Academy (AMPAS).

Directors                      Sabaah Folayan  
                                      Deborah Riley Draper

Producers                    Emily Best  
                                      Megan Goedewaagen

Executive Producers      Lois Vossen  
                                     Sarah Smith  
                                     Jonako Donley  
                                     Deborah Riley Draper  
                                     Iris Smith  
                                     Jennifer Wilson  
                                     Kaily Smith Westbrook  
                                     Tara Smith  
                                     Stephanie Soechtig  
                                     Kristin Lazure  
                                     Regina K. Scully

**ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS**

*Independent Lens* is an award-winning documentary series that fosters understanding, seeks to build empathy, and encourages a more united society. Produced by ITVS, *Independent Lens* documentaries have premiered on PBS for 25 years and streamed on YouTube, helping Americans foster deeper connections between communities and themselves. From the Oscar-nominated *I Am Not Your Negro* to the Peabody-acclaimed docuseries *Philly D.A.* and the Emmy® award-winning *The Invisible War*, *Independent Lens* provides viewers with in-depth, nuanced storytelling reflecting the experiences of people from a variety of voices and communities. *Independent Lens* is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: a private corporation funded by the American People, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation.



Stream anytime on the PBS app or YouTube. Learn more at [pbs.org/independentlens](https://pbs.org/independentlens)

#### **ABOUT ITVS**

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit [itvs.org](https://itvs.org).

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