Rally: Vote yes on Women's Equality Act

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The Women's Equality Act has not been passed in the New York State Senate and women's rights groups protested in Rochester for its immediate passage into law.

Nearly 100 people gathered at the American Association of University Women on East Avenue Monday to call for a vote and the Senate's passage of the WEA.

The WEA is calling for:

» Equal pay for equal work;

» The end of sexual harassment on the job;

» Payment of attorney's fees in employment, credit, and housing sex discrimination cases;

» Ending discrimination in employment for women with children;

» Ending housing discrimination against women who are victims of domestic violence;

» Ensuring that victims of domestic violence are not punished for "violating" their own order of protection.

» Authorizing the creation of a pilot program to allow domestic violence victims to testify remotely and not in front of the accused;

» Better protection to survivors of human trafficking;

» Ending pregnancy discrimination by requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant workers;

» Ensuring abortion care to women when her health is at risk.

The state Assembly has passed 10-point WEA legislation. The senate has separate bills for each of the 10 WEA demands.

Supporters of the WEA were in Albany on June 10 to call for a vote on the entire 10-point act before the current senate session adjourns.

"We want a vote on the ten items," said Katherine Smith, vice president of the Greater Rochester area League of Women's Voters.

KaeLyn Rich, director of the Genesee Valley Chapter of New York Civil Liberties Union added that they aren't concerned how many separate stand-alone bills it takes to pass all 10 provisions, as long as all 10 are passed.

"We want the whole 100 percent," she said. "That's fine with us. If they pass the whole omnibus bill that's fine with us. We will work with them, but aren't going to settle for less than we deserve."

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