

# Supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment Gathering for March in Washington Sunday

By LESLIE BENNETTS

One year ago this Sunday, suffragist Alice Paul died at the age of 92. And on the first anniversary of her death, thousands of women are expected in Washington to march on the Capitol in support of the equal rights amendment.

Alice Paul and her contemporaries fought for the right to vote, and after winning it in 1920, Dr. Paul helped draft the forerunner of today's proposed ERA. With ratification by three more states still needed for the proposed amendment to become law, the current battle is focused on efforts to persuade Congress to extend the seven-year deadline for ratification, which is scheduled to run out next March.

"We hope to show the widespread grassroots support for the ERA and the extension — that it is still not only viable, but growing in strength," explained Eleanor Cutri Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women, which has helped to organize the march. "We think this will be the largest march ever held for the ERA," she said.

## 300 Groups Expected

More than 300 groups are expected to be represented, including the NAACP, the American Bar Association, the National Council of Churches, Catholics Act for ERA, the United Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church of America, the American Association of University Women, the Gray Panthers, the Democratic National Committee, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Y.W.C.A., Planned Parenthood and a California group called Men for the ERA.

The Girl Scouts of America, which has endorsed the ERA, will provide the parade's honor guard, and there will be

a drum and bugle corps and a jazz band, along with other step-lively music. Organizers are predicting a "bottom-line" turnout of 20,000 to 30,000 people from every state in the union, and up to 50,000 if the weather is nice. Marchers are being asked to dress in white, as did the early suffragists; many of Sunday's demonstrators

from New York to Washington, according to Noreen Connell, president of the New York chapter of NOW, whose list includes the United Store Workers, American Women in Science, Local 1199 of the Hospital Workers Union, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, District 13 of the New York County Nurses Association, the Bar-

The demonstrators are assembling in Washington on Sunday at 11 A.M. at the 14th Street end of the Mall. They will march east on Constitution Avenue to a rally on the Capitol steps afterward. Among those committed to speak at the rally are Marlo Thomas, Elliott Gould, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Midge Costanza, Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, Betty Friedan and Representative Elizabeth Holtzman.

## No Organized Opposition

Anti-ERA activists say they have scheduled no organized opposition to the march. "We're not planning any counter-demonstration, but we have asked for a nationwide day of prayer," reported Phyllis Schlafly, a leading opponent of the ERA. "Stop-ERA, pro-life and pro-family groups will be joining in inter-faith observances, and the one in the Washington area will be held at the Lincoln Memorial," she said. Mrs. Schlafly will debate Mrs. Smeal on the subject of the ERA on Sunday's "Issues and Answers" television show on ABC.

The House Judiciary Committee is expected to vote on the extension sometime this month, and Sunday's marchers are being encouraged to stay over in Washington until Monday for a "Lobbying Day" to see their Congressional representatives.

"Until the 18th Amendment, there was no time deadline for the ratification of amendments," explained Noreen Connell. "The Constitution contains no stipulation for any time limit; it's something Congress imposes. They put that in because they wanted to stop amendments that are no longer relevant from floating around aimlessly forever. We are arguing that the ERA is still a timely issue, and that therefore the extension should be granted. There should be no time limit on equality."

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will also wear sashes and carry banners in the traditional white, gold and purple colors used by the original campaigners for women's suffrage. "We think it will be quite a beautiful march," said Mrs. Smeal.

Four hundred busloads of supporters from around the country are expected to be joined by planeloads (chartered as well as commercial), trainloads and car caravans of assorted groups, individuals and families.

Up to 50 buses will be needed to carry representatives of various organiza-

nard Women's Center, Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Staten Island Community College, a women's group from Equitable Life Assurance, and the Village Independent Democrats. Bus tickets are still available through New York NOW at \$10 round trip. Such local political candidates as Carter Burden, William Woodward and Betty Lall have sponsored radio ads for the march, as has Liz Claiborne, a clothing designer.