

Term project – phyllis schlafly essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Phyllis Schlafly is an American author and political activist who is an opponent of women's liberation. She is best known for single handedly defeating the proposed Equal Rights Amendment in 1982, which called for men and women to be given equal treatment under the law. Schlafly book, *Feminist Fantasies*, includes essays on feminism in the media, the workplace, the home, and the military.

Phyllis Schlafly founded and heads a conservative group called the Eagle Forum, which supports conservative candidates and causes. This person is worth knowing because she is a remarkable person who is a defender of women's traditional place in the home. The Equal Rights Amendment was first introduced to Congress after the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, which enfranchised women. At the Seneca Falls Convention in 1923, which is an influential women rights convention held in New York, the ERA was endorsed by Alice Paul's National Woman's Party. The NWP fought for women's rights during the early 20th century. However, the ERA proved to be a controversial topic concerning women's rights.

Some feminists such as the National Consumers League's Florence Kelly felt that this amendment will undermine legislations protecting female workers. They believed that it will threaten the minimum hours and other protective legislations that were fought for previously in the late 19th century and early 20th century. (Tobias: 134) The amendment, however, was gaining momentum after the 1940 Republican platform endorsed the ERA and the Democratic Party endorsed it four years later. Phyllis Schlafly's remarkable anti-ERA campaign, many years later, managed to expostulate many of the supporters and helped rid of the ERA.

Before being active in anti-ERA campaigns, Schlafly had not taken much interest in feminism. Her turn to antifeminism reflected a “ turn in grassroots conservatism to social issues. ” (Critchlow: 217) Schlafly had many reasons to back up her opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. In about 100 subsequent publication of her monthly newsletter, The Phyllis Schlafly Report, Schlafly talked about the dangers of the ERA. In the February 1972 publication of “ What’s Wrong with ‘ Equal Rights’ for Women? “, Schlafly expressed the fundamental principles that would guide the anti-ERA campaign.

She believed that the family “ assures a woman the most precious and important right of all-the right to keep her own baby and to be supported and protected in the enjoyment of watching her baby grow and develop. ” (Schlafly: 90) Schlafly recognized the benefit to the traditional way of a family, which is that men were obligated to support and protect their wives and children. In addition to discussing the positives of the current situation, she also said that the ERA won’t give women any new rights: “ The fact is that women already enjoy every constitutional right that men enjoy and have enjoyed equal employment opportunity since 1964. (Schlafly: 119)The ERA only pertains to government actions and not private actions so it won’t guarantee equal pay for equal work.

(Viguerie: 138) The ERA instead would take away rights and privileges. Drafted women would have to combat equally with men. It would also abolish a woman’s right to child support and alimony. The ERA would also transfer immense powers to the federal government and make taxpayer funding of abortion and same-sex marriages constitutional rights.

(Schlafly: 120) She felt that the women libbers don't realize that most women want to live their traditional ways so actions must be taken. By the time Phyllis Schlafly began campaigning in 1972, 30 out of the required 38 states had already ratified the amendment. After Schlafly created a campaign, 35 states ratified the amendment. In trying to stop further ratification is truly a heroic act. Through her countless speeches, books, radio addresses and monthly newsletter, the Equal Rights Amendment fell short of supporting states needed for ratification.

After ten years, on June 30, 1982, the ERA died. Phyllis Schlafly is clearly someone who rejects the idea that American women are oppressed and mistreated. Most people will have the opposite opinion but the essays in her book *Feminist Fantasies* explains clearly why she feels the way she does. Schlafly talked about what the roles of men and the roles of women should be. She talks about the morality of women receiving the same rights as men.

She also made comparisons between the United States and other countries such as Africa. Schlafly believes that of all the classes, the American woman is the most privileged. They have the most rights and the fewest duties. The family gives a woman the physical, financial, and emotional security of the home for all her life. " (Schlafly: 90) The inventions in America have helped reduce the work load of women.

The use of electricity allows women to run all the labor-saving devices to complete tasks which otherwise would take many servants to complete. The invention of the sewing machine by Elias Howe resulted in an abundance of readymade clothing. The invention of the process of freezing foods by

Clarence Birdseye is used to preserve food so the need to shop everyday is reduced. Henry Ford's mass production of automobiles allows Americans to move from one place to another to get the things necessary. Women in other countries have a harder time doing their daily tasks. They often go on foot to get food at a certain amount or else it will spoil since the people of those countries weren't as fortunate as Americans.

The time required to complete household duties has been reduced so there is more leisure time for women. Women, from Schlafly's point of view, have greater rights than women of other countries and by fighting for "equal rights" will only lead to relegation. Phyllis Schlafly is a woman who speaks her opinion. When the ERA was introduced to her, she found it to be unjust and therefore organized events, wrote books, and got supporters.

By doing what she felt was necessary Schlafly was able to rid of the ERA. I am somewhat like her because if there is something that will affect me that I don't like, I will try to appeal it. I will not want to live with something that could possibly cause harm to many people. The only difference between me and her is that I probably won't have gone very far in the process. She was very persistent in achieving her goal and it paid off.

I would want to emulate that tenacity because being persistent can make the seemingly impossible tasks possible. Phyllis Schlafly is someone whose life is worth knowing. She is unlike any other typical woman. She tried something and succeeded. She proved that any one person can make a difference.

Her fight against the Equal Rights Movement was an arduous task that took many years to complete. It was backed up with many reasons in the form of essays and books. She has truly made an impact on the lives of many.