



### Opinion: Women's rights deserve more than bad jokes

BY **MELODI ERDOGAN**, ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

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Want to hear a joke?

Women's rights are an element of politics that is often disregarded in comparison to major controversial events, yet, it deserves just as much if not more attention. What once posed as an immature joke that unfortunately never gets old for the opposite sex is a major issue in a woman's life. Since 1919 when the women's suffrage amendment was passed, women have slowly but surely been proving their worth in every field a man thought she couldn't. We have come to a point in history that is supremely more beneficial than anything previous. Yet we still run into problems that show how women's rights aren't taken as seriously as they need to be.

In international news, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been frustrating women with his plans to ruin their position in society. During his "reign" of Turkey, he has continually been fighting against women's rights, once saying in an interview in 2010 that he doesn't "believe in equality between men and women." Having plans to crack down on abortions and encouraging women to give birth to three to five children, Erdogan infuses his religious beliefs into his decision-making, which is against Turkey's secular nature. Yes he has restructured the country's economic state into a stable position, but does that require that his wife be covered with a headscarf?

In national news, demonstrators for and against the Texas House Abortion Bill crowded the Capitol on Tuesday to eventually hear it's approval which took representatives more than 10 hours to decide on. The bill requires doctors to have specific admitting privileges at hospitals, only permits abortions in surgical centers and bans abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Women's rights activists fought against the bill and demonstrated this with wire hangers, making the argument that once women cannot legally have an abortion, illegal abortions will become much more common. Rep. Senfronia Thompson, democrat, called for an exception to the 20 week rule in case of rape and incest. But she was denied. In the meantime, over 50 women's health centers have closed down, according to Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America in an article by the Associated Press.

What seems like it would only be a domestic problem within each country's individual borders actually is a world-wide controversy that affects women all around the globe. Whether they're not respected in their workplace or denied rights concerning their own bodies, these conflicts are relevant from Texas to Turkey. As a Turkish-American citizen, I have observed these controversies first hand, experiencing how I should be wearing a headscarf, avoiding birth control and having as many children as possible.

Passed in 1919, the 19th Amendment in the U.S. Constitution granted women the right to vote. Post World War II, while men were being drafted for war, women took their jobs. They proved that they can not only maintain but flourish in a male-dominated workforce. This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act.

In 2008, a woman ran for presidency in the United States, and in 2016, the same woman, Hilary Clinton, will probably do it again.

Women's rights have never been something to joke about and still lack proper understanding in today's day and age. Beyond the specific rights women are fighting for now is the realization that women's rights are still a controversy. Even with so many talented and ambitious women in the world, we're still not being given full control over our own present and future.

One would think that with 94 years of suffrage women would have established all the rights they need to provide for an unrestricted future. Despite plenty of other conflict around the world, women's rights are still a relevant issue that need attention. When the time comes to be an adult in the real world, I would like to see first-hand that I can control my future career and lifestyle as I please. I will not be wearing a headscarf and I hope to earn equal pay to my male counterparts. Women's rights are a basic requirement, and as seen by the media's concern over the topic recently, it needs a lot more sorting out in the political arena.

Women are fighting across the globe to make their place in a man's world; legislation should focus more on giving a woman her true freedom and equality that she is entitled to, not only in the United States but across the globe.

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