

CEDAW: A UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) is a human rights treaty, the only one that focuses on the rights of women. Over 180 nations have ratified CEDAW including Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ireland, Iraq, Italy, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, and Sweden. The United States is one of only a handful of states that have NOT. These are Iran, Sudan, Somalia, the Holy See, and two small Pacific Island nations: Palau and Tonga.

It is ironic that the United States has not ratified CEDAW: The United States was instrumental in drafting CEDAW at the UN. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter signed CEDAW and sent it to the Senate, the body responsible for ratifying a treaty or convention. Since that time the Senate Foreign Relations Committee considered the treaty twice and both times in a bi-partisan way voted in favor of it. It has never reached the floor of the Senate where, in order to be ratified, two-thirds of the Senate needs to vote in favor of it.

Some conservatives take a religious stance against CEDAW arguing that its passage would mean changing US laws to further a liberal agenda and to facilitate abortion. It has been pointed out, however, that there are very conservative countries, both Christian and Moslem, e.g. Ireland and Saudi Arabia, that have ratified CEDAW. Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Herbert Bush opposed ratification; President Barack Obama is in favor of ratification

June 24, 2015 Senator Barbara Boxer held a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearing on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Women's Issues focusing on violence against girls and women. An unprecedented number of women senators testified and Senator Boxer noted that it was "ridiculous" and "embarrassing" that CEDAW has not been ratified by the United States.

In 2014, the movement Cities-for-CEDAW which involves the adoption of CEDAW as a city ordinance was born. It held a conference in January, 2015. Among the cities participating were Kansas City, Louisville, New York City, Raleigh and Washington, DC. Over [150 organizations](#) including the American Bar Association, American Anthropological Association, NAACP, YWCA, and Unitarian Universalist UN Office officially support CEDAW. At its 82nd annual meeting in 2014, the [United States Conference of Mayors passed a resolution](#) in support of CEDAW and urged U.S. cities to adopt it as an ordinance.

What does ratification of CEDAW or its adoption as an ordinance mean? The official acceptance of CEDAW provides a legal basis for fighting gender inequality. In the last few years, activists in the African nation of Mozambique identified patrilineal inheritance, that is inheritance through the male line, as fostering gender inequality and perpetuating poverty among women. They used the nation's adoption of CEDAW to win their case. Now women and men are by law equal and have equal access to inheritance, particularly land, a

critical source of food. In Los Angeles where CEDAW was adopted as a city ordinance, it was determined that the location and number of street lights meant that women and men are unequal at night with respect to their physical security. Lighting was improved once this was determined.

Major issues that CEDAW could help address in the United States include:

- Violence against women, particularly domestic violence.
- Pay Equity.
- Paid parental leave for both parents in all lines of work.
- Sex and Labor Trafficking

Some sources:

Cities for CEDAW tool kit (http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CEDAW-toolkit_May-2016.pdf) includes a fact sheet:

https://citiesforcedaw.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/cities-for-cedaw-fact-sheet_0-2.pdf

Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearing on combating violence against women.

<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/combating-violence-and-discrimination-against-women-a-global-call-to-action-06-24-14>

CEDAW Task Force of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

<http://www.cedaw2015.org/>

The Feminist Majority http://www.feminist.org/news/pdfs/CEDAW_2014FMF.pdf

Cities for CEDAW Facebook https://www.facebook.com/cities4CEDAW/timeline?ref=page_internal

Cities for CEDAW

<https://citiesforcedaw.wordpress.com/>

Why the United States should ratify CEDAW

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2013/06_13/06_03/060313_usa3.htm

Wright, Wendy (5-7-2010) Concerned Women of America

Why the U.S. Has Not – and Should Not – Ratify CEDAW - See more at: <http://www.cwfa.org/why-the-u-s-has-not-and-should-not-ratify-cedaw/#sthash.PLzZftTI.dpuf>



Organizations in Support of CEDAW

1. ACT for Women and Girls
2. ADVANCE
3. Advocates for Youth
4. Alaska Federation of Natives
5. American Anthropological Association
6. American Association of University Women
7. American Baptist Women's Ministries
8. American Bar Association
9. American Civil Liberties Union
10. American Federation of Teachers
11. American Friends Service Committee
12. American Islamic Congress
13. American Jewish Committee
14. American Jewish World Service
15. American Library Association
16. American Psychiatric Association
17. American Psychological Association
18. Amnesty International USA
19. Anti-Defamation League
20. Asian American Justice Center
21. The Association for Women in Psychology
22. Better World Campaign
23. Black Women United for Action
24. Business And Professional Women/USA
25. Cardea Center for Women
26. CARE USA
27. Catholics for Choice
28. CEDPA
29. Center for American Progress
30. Center for Health and Gender Equity
31. Center for International Policy
32. Center for Reproductive Rights
33. Center for Women Policy Studies
34. Center for Women's Global Leadership

35. Church Women United
36. Church World Service
37. Citizens for Global Solutions
38. Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
39. Coalition of Labor Union Women
40. Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women
41. Communications Consortium Media Center
42. The Communications Workers of America
43. Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes
44. Connect US
45. CRISIS: Global Public Health
46. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
47. Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
48. Department on the Status of Women, San Francisco
49. Demos
50. Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
51. Enterprising and Professional Women of the United States of America
52. The Episcopal Church USA
53. Equal Justice Society
54. Equality Now
55. Family Violence Prevention Fund
56. Federally Employed Women
57. Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas
58. Feminist Majority
59. Friends Committee on National Legislation
60. Geena Davis Institute on Gender and Media
61. Gender Action
62. General Federation of Women's Clubs
63. Georgetown University Law Center Women's Legal Alliance
64. Global Fund for Women
65. Global Justice Ministry, Metropolitan Community Churches
66. Global Rights: Partners for Justice
67. Global Summit of Women
68. Gray Panthers
69. Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
70. Heifer International
71. Human Rights Advocates
72. Human Rights Ahead
73. Human Rights First
74. Human Rights Coalition of North Carolina
75. Human Rights Watch
76. The Hunger Project

77. In Every Language
78. Institute for Science and Human Values
79. Interaction
80. Interfaith Center, New York City
81. International Center for Research on Women
82. International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women
83. International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
84. International Labor Rights Forum
85. International Women's Health Coalition
86. International Women's Rights Action Watch
87. Ipas
88. Just Associates (JASS)
89. Jewish Council for Public Affairs
90. Jewish Women International
91. Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs
92. Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
93. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
94. Leadership Council on Human Rights
95. League of Women Voters of the United States
96. Legal Momentum
97. Lummi Victims of Crime Program
98. MADRE
99. Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns
100. MomsRising.org
101. Ms. Foundation for Women
102. NAACP
103. Na'amat USA
104. National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
105. National Association of Commissions for Women
106. National Association of Social Workers
107. 9to5 National Association of Working Women
108. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
109. National Committee on CEDAW
110. National Conference for Community and Justice
111. National Conference of Puerto Rican Women
112. National Congress of American Indians
113. National Council of Churches USA, Women's Ministries
114. National Council of Jewish Women
115. National Council of La Raza
116. National Council of Negro Women
117. National Council of Women's Organizations
118. National Education Association
119. National Employment Lawyers Association

120. National Health Law Program
121. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
122. National Lawyers Guild
123. National Network to End Domestic Violence
124. National Organization for Women
125. National Partnership for Women and Families
126. National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States
127. National Women and AIDS Collective
128. National Women's Law Center
129. National Women's Political Caucus
130. NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
131. The Newspaper Guild
132. Older Women's League
133. Open Society Policy Center
134. Physicians for Human Rights
135. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
136. Presbyterian Church USA
137. Project Keshet
138. Refugee Women's Network
139. Refugees International
140. Religious Action Center
141. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights
142. Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
143. Service Employees International Union
144. Service Women's Action Network
145. Sigma Delta Epsilon/Graduate Women in Science
146. Sisters of Mercy
147. SisterSong
148. Soroptimist International of the Americas
149. 149. Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc.
150. Tahirih Justice Center
151. TransAfrica Forum
152. Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
153. United Church of Christ
154. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society
155. United Methodist Women
156. United Nations Association, USA
157. United Nations Foundation
158. United States Committee for UNIFEM
159. United States Human Rights Network
160. Urban Justice Center
161. US Women and Cuba Collaboration

- 162. US Women Connect
- 163. Vital Voices
- 164. WAND
- 165. Washington Office on Latin America
- 166. WILD for Human Rights
- 167. WITNESS Woman's National Democratic Club
- 168. Women Donors Network
- 169. Women for Women International
- 172. Women Graduates USA
- 173. Women of Color Policy Network
- 174. Women of Reform Judaism
- 175. WomenNC
- 176. Women Thrive Worldwide
- 177. Women's Business Development Center
- 178. Women's City Club of New York
- 179. Women's Environment and Development Organization
- 180. Women's Intercultural Network
- 181. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, U.S. Section
- 182. Women's Learning Partnership
- 183. Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
- 183. Women's Refugee Commission
- 184. Women's Research and Education Institute
- 185. Women's UN Report Network
- 186. World Rights
- 187. World Without Genocide
- 188. YWCA
- 189. Zonta International

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