

Title

Supporting the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Milwaukee, the State of Wisconsin and the United States. Affirming the principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women.

Body

WHEREAS, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, and became an international treaty as of September 3, 1981, with 187 United Nations member nations out of 193 having agreed to be bound by CEDAW's provisions; and

WHEREAS, CEDAW is often described as an international bill of rights for women that consists of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination; and,

WHEREAS, the Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."; and,

WHEREAS, by accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including: to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women; to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises; and

WHEREAS, the Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women; and,

WHEREAS, countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice and are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations; and,

WHEREAS, the United States is among a small minority of countries that have not yet ratified CEDAW; and,

WHEREAS, fully eradicated discrimination based on gender and its connection and intersectionality with other forms of discrimination to achieve one of the most basic human rights, equality; and

WHEREAS, CEDAW provides a comprehensive framework for governments to examine their policies and practices in relation to women, girls and others who identify as female and to rectify discrimination based on gender; and

WHEREAS, City and County governments have a legitimate role affirming the importance of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and others who identify as female in communities and to serve as guides for public policy; and

WHEREAS, adherence to the principles of CEDAW on the local level will especially improve safety and promote equal access to and equity in health care, employment, economic development and educational opportunities for women, girls and others who identify as female and will also address the continuing and critical problems of violence against women, girls and others who identify as female; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to strengthen existing local mechanisms, institutions and procedures and to provide adequate resources, commitment and authority to: (1) advise on the impact of local government policies on women, girls and others who identify as female; (2) comprehensively monitor the situation of women, girls and others who identify as female in recognition of the interconnectedness of discrimination based on gender, race and other social criteria; and (3) help formulate new policies and effectively carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom advocate locally for the United Nations and are willing to work with officials in interpreting and implementing the principles of CEDAW in the City of Milwaukee; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission affirms the principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women in our community and the elimination of barriers to political, social, economic and cultural discrimination, including issues of domestic violence, trafficking, affordable health care and child care, parental rights, economic security, pay inequities, paid family leave, and educational and vocational opportunities; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission shall forward a copy of this Resolution to all appropriate city officials and departments, post it on the City of Milwaukee's governmental website and celebrate it on the City of Milwaukee's appropriate social media sites; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission encourage city staff and elected officials to become familiar with the provisions of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and advise the Council of any changes in policy or practice they feel would help the City of Milwaukee align with the tenets of this convention; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Milwaukee Common Council expressing our support for the United States' ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).