

District 11 - CEDAW Ratification Effort – August-Dec. 2009

Prepared by Jean Bryant, District 11, LAA Chair

It is time to begin our CEDAW ratification effort with the aim of obtaining US Senate Ratification by mid December, 2009. Our first steps are for each club to make information about CEDAW available to its members. Useful information will be posted on the District 11 website under Committees, then Advocacy, and CEDAW. If you prefer, you may contact me advocacy@zonta-district11.org and request that I send material directly to your club via email attachments.

The proposed CEDAW Resolution that will be voted on at the District 11 Conference provides a good summary of the history and importance of CEDAW for women around the world. Please be prepared to vote on the Resolution at the Conference. Club presidents should have received a copy of the Resolutions that will be considered with their convention materials. They and registered delegates will receive the resolutions again prior to the Conference. Conference resolutions are also available from the District 11 website.

We also urge clubs to adopt their own CEDAW Resolution – and have prepared a club CEDAW Resolution template to assist you.

Our primary effort between now and the District Conference is to educate members about CEDAW – why it was adopted by the UN, the impact it has had on women around the world, and why it is important for the US to ratify the Treaty that our country played a key role in getting adopted by the UN. We also need to explain why the US has NOT ratified the Treaty to date, and develop arguments to counter Senate opponents.

Information about CEDAW will be posted on the District 11 Website under Committees, Advocacy, CEDAW. You may download the documents and links to your club websites to make it easy for all to read, print, and digest the information.

In addition to educating our own members, Zonta clubs can play a key role in enlisting other organizations and groups in the effort to get Senate ratification of CEDAW: organizations such as AAUW, BPW, NOW chapters, women lawyers, religious organizations, service clubs such as Rotary and Lions, city and county governments, and university students.

Some members might be interested in preparing newspaper articles about CEDAW and its importance for women and human rights; others might be willing to speak to some of the organizations suggested above about the importance to women in other nations of US ratification.

Finally, we must contact members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and all other US Senators and urge them to vote for ratification of CEDAW. To assist you in this process, I have prepared a list of members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and their contact

information as well as instructions for obtaining the mailing address or phone or Fax # of senators, plus a letter template addressed to members of the Foreign Relations committee; individualized letter templates you may use to send to (1) your own senator and (2) to any senator, and a letter template for Zonta clubs to use to send to their senators. Clubs might also send their Club CEDAW Resolution with cover letters to their Senators, and try to arrange face-to-face meetings with their Senators when they are home.

All of the material I prepared has been approved by the Zonta International UN and LAA Chairs.

Please note: Citizens can only **email** their **own** senators.

Although the letter templates will save you time and hopefully encourage many Zontians and their friends and other CEDAW supporters to contact Senators, I urge you to **personalize** your letter templates by adding at least one example of why CEDAW is needed (e.g. an example of how some nations deny women/girls basic human rights (e.g. education; access to health care, work, etc.) and/or an example of how CEDAW has improved the lives and opportunities of women/girls.

Together, if our ratification effort succeeds, we can take a major step to ensure that women no longer are denied basic human rights.

We will need to begin our letter writing campaign soon after the District Conference, so please spend the interim period preparing your members to learn about CEDAW and its importance for women throughout the world.

The letter and resolution templates and contact list for Senate Foreign Relations Committee members will be posted on the District website under Committees, Advocacy, CEDAW and will be sent to club presidents for dissemination to all members.

I urge Zontians to please email me advocacy@zonta-district11.org with any questions or concerns that you have about CEDAW.

Likewise, I encourage you to share strategies that your club devises with me so I can share new ideas with other clubs.

Thank you for participating in this important effort.

Yours in Zonta,

Jean Bryant, District 11, LAA chair