

CITIES FOR CEDAW - BEIJING+20

Local Ordinances: San Francisco became the first municipality in the world to adopt a local ordinance reflecting the principles of the UN Treaty known as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The San Francisco CEDAW Ordinance focuses on preventing discrimination and ensuring gender equality in government and the private sector.¹ The ordinance covers health care, employment, economic development, education and violence against women and girls. Other US cities including Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles and Berkeley, California, as well as the State of Hawaii, have enacted similar initiatives. Next year's UN commemoration of "Beijing+20" offers an opportunity for these cities to share their "best practices."

Citizen Support: 186 countries signed the Treaty in 1969, including the US. However, the US is one of a handful of countries that has not ratified the Treaty. This has led to confusion among the international signatories who look to the US for guidance on implementing the Treaty. To show that our citizenry supports the CEDAW principles, the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women and the Women's Intercultural Network (NGO consultative to the UN ECOSOC) are serving as peer leaders in partnership with the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York, to launch a "Cities for CEDAW" Campaign to take CEDAW to our cities for implementation.

Women and men around the country are mobilizing at the grassroots level to encourage their communities to adopt CEDAW ordinances. The Campaign will "make the global local" by promoting the adoption of the UN Treaty at the local level. Multiple stakeholders will be engaged, including the media, business, youth, NGOs, local and State Commissions on the Status of Women, faith communities and women leaders. We are rallying Mayors around the country to join with California Lt. Gov Gavin Newsom, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee and commit to passing a CEDAW Ordinance in their cities.

Call to Action: The Cities for CEDAW Campaign was launched during UN CSW Sessions in New York in March 2014. **A Western Regional Summit and Campaign Call to Action will be held August 23, 2014 in San Francisco for Women's Equality Day.** Western Region State Representatives are invited to bring their State Plans for Action to the Summit in preparation for a US Women's Platform for Action, including best local practices on CEDAW. The Campaign will culminate June 2015 at the 83rd National Conference of Mayors to be held in San Francisco, where Mayors who have adopted CEDAW resolutions or have enacted ordinances will urge local action in support of enacting and implementing municipal CEDAW ordinances.

Why focus on cities? We see 3 key reasons: Urban areas boast the highest concentration of human and financial capital in the US. Cities have the ability to initiate rapid change--even when the national government cannot respond. Municipal policies can promote growth, prosperity and jobs. The Cities for CEDAW Campaign can serve as the framework for defining a US Women's Agenda in the post-Millennium Development Goals era.

Women are increasingly assuming greater leadership roles at the municipal level. 18% of the 1,341 mayors of U.S. cities with populations over 30,000, are women.² Worldwide, the trend is even more striking. For example China has 500 women mayors and vice-mayors.

The Cities for CEDAW campaign can increase women voter turnout at the local level. Statistics show that women participate in presidential elections but are not as active in voting in local elections. [fn 4] Because CEDAW provides a framework for women's human rights that impacts women at the grassroots local level (from gender-equitable public facilities to flexible work schedules, and access to gender-responsive health services), we anticipate a groundswell of interest and activism at the local level.

For more information: citiesforCedaw@winaction.org, or Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. (will link to URLs on line)

¹ *Human Rights in Action: San Francisco's Local Implementation of the United Nations' Women's Treaty (CEDAW)*, City and County of San Francisco, Department on the Status of Women, 2010, www.sfgov.org/dosw. San Francisco's ordinance was enacted 1998. [What are the dates of the other city/state ordinances?]

² U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2013 website directory, www.usmayors.org.

⁴ From 1972 to 2012, ~ 71% of voters in San Francisco voted in the presidential elections but only 49% voted for the mayor. In New York City, in 2008 and 2009, women turned out in greater numbers for the presidential elections than they did for the mayoral ones. [cites]