



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

BULLETIN

Founded in 1925

Meeting Continuously Since 1948

November 2005

4026 Hummer Road, Suite #214, Annandale, Virginia 22003

Volume 58 Issue 3

The topic for November is *CEDAW*

The program material in this issue provides background information in preparation for the **CEDAW Forum** on Saturday, November 12, at 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm at the Ernst Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike Annandale, VA.
Take Beltway (I-495) to Exit 52 (Rte 236, Little River Turnpike) West toward Fairfax City. NVCC will be approximately ¾ miles on the left. (See page R-8 for panelists)

Vote On Tuesday November 8, 2005.

Calendar

November (Important Dates)

- 01-08 Voter Service Phones
- 01 December Bulletin Deadline/Board Agenda Deadline**
- 03 End of Ramadan
- 07-08 School Closed
- 08 Election Day**
- 9, 10, 14, 15 Unit Meetings - **CEDAW Discussion**
- 11 *Veterans Day*
- 12 CEDAW Panel Forum**
- 15 Sequoyah Condo Election
- 16 Board Meeting/Dec. Units Briefing for the Board**
- 16 Oct UC Letter Deadline
- 23 *School Closes 2 hrs early*
- 24-25 *Thanksgiving-School Closed*

December

- 06 January Bulletin Deadline**
- 07 WRT Pre-session in Richmond
- 8,12,13,14 Unit Meetings - **Program Planning**
- 12 Board Agenda Deadline
- 21 Board Meeting/Jan. UC Letter Deadline**
- 23-Jan 2 School Vacation/ LWVFA Office Closed
- 25 *Christmas Day*
- 26 *Hanukkah/ Kwanzaa/Boxing Day*

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LWVUS recently sent out the *First Call to Convention*. It will be held June 10-13, 2006, in Minneapolis, MN. In preparation for this event, Leagues are encouraged to participate in Program Planning (LWVFA's is in December 2005).



President's Letter

The results are in – LWVFA is off to another outstanding program year!

Many thanks to our Redistricting Committee for September's program and to Rona, Susan and the "Gangs" committee for October. We will continue the discussion on Gangs at our General Meeting in January 2006 with a noted speaker on the subject. And when you attend the CEDAW Forum on November 12th, you will experience a first-class panel discussion.

Fall is a wonderful time to be a "Leaguer" — we receive a lot of attention for our elections material and voter registration activities. At *Fall for Fairfax* on October 1, several citizens came to the LWVFA table to get candidate information—more than one person said that they "wait for the League information" before deciding how they will vote. It is comments like those that make all the hard work we do worth while.

Speaking of candidate information – kudos to the new Prince William Area Unit. The unit (which meets in the afternoon and evening on the second Wednesday of the month) put together a "What's On The Ballot" (WOTB) for Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. It was distributed throughout the county and cities to the schools, libraries, and government places just as in Fairfax. Thanks to all the enthusiastic members of the unit, especially to Jeanette Rishell and Anita Ford, who helped make this happen!

Another reason I am proud to be a Leaguer is that our organization promotes education and reasoned discussion of issues. I believe "enlightened public discourse" is a rare commodity these days as much of what we see, read, and hear is geared to polarize and divide us into groups pitted against each other.

I maintain that the very survival of our democracy is at stake when our leaders (at ALL levels of government!) encourage such divisiveness for supposedly political gain. We need to be able to "hear and discuss" all sides of an issue with the goal of finding the common ground that best serves our communities and our nation. It isn't an easy process, but The League of Women Voters is, *and has always been*, about this kind of public education and discourse. Our voices are needed today, more than ever before!

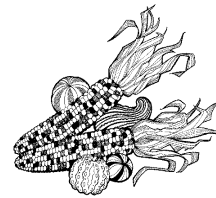
Sherry

Suffragists News

Plans are coming along for our Suffragists Re-enactors (plus a couple of men) to participate in the day-after-Thanksgiving Reston Parade. It's fun and not onerous (approximately 1.5 miles from start to finish). If anyone else is interested and has a long black skirt, white long-sleeved blouse and hat, give us a call. We will be looking at other events next spring. Bernice Colvard (703-978-3227) or Lavinia Voss (703-742-0997).

Word Search

Most organizations have their own jargon; the League is no different. Beginning next month, a new feature will be started. It will be a word puzzle using "League Lingo" to encourage members to learn and become familiar with the terms. Time will be set aside at unit meetings for solvers to discuss and ask questions about these words and their meanings. Long time members can help newer members understand the words and what they mean.



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Board Notes

Lavinia Voss

At the September 21, 2005 board meeting **Una White** and **Joanne Hersch**, were appointed co-chairs of the Sequoyah Condominium Election.

The board approved printing an additional 15,000 "What's on the Ballot" (WOTB) at a cost of \$780, to fill the needs of Fairfax County Schools; this request had not been included in the original printing. 1,000 WOTB, created for the Prince William Area Units was also approved. The board acknowledged that in the future Prince William and Fairfax WOTB would be printed on different colored paper to keep them distinct and easy to distinguish from each other.

Program Co-Director **Susan Dill** gave the report on Redistricting (see page 4) and an update on December's program planning meeting. Program Co-Director **Rona Ackerman** reported on the trials and tribulations she had been having with the LWVUS coordinator for the CEDAW forum. After discussion, it was decided to continue with the plans and keep the grant.

Action Director **Jane Hilder** said that the testimony she had given on the budget surplus had not been successful in changing the BOS plans. Membership Director **Leslie Vandivere** reported our membership up this month to 456. She also covered the problems she had in trying to pull together an accurate data base for the printer for mailing the *Bulletin* in October.

Treasurer **Therese Martin** told of her efforts to get PR on our programs; she is helping while we seek a PR person. Unit Coordinator **Mary Field** voiced some of her concerns regarding our newer units not understanding the processes.

Several attendees of the LWVVA workshops in Charlottesville reported on them. President **Sherry Zachry** spoke about the Lorton Marker rededication ceremony next year, and asked everyone to be thinking about what we want to do in conjunction with it.

Seen and Heard Around Fairfax and Beyond-

1. LWVFA letter to the editor on redistricting was published in *The Washington Post Fairfax Extra*, September 8, 2005
2. A letter was distributed at a public hearing on the inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places of the Laurel Hill property. An article appeared on 9/9/05 Fairfax Extra in *The Washington Post* seeming to move the Occoquan Workhouse site from where our marker shows it was located.

Unit News

Fond farewells go to two long time members who are leaving the area to be closer to their families, Carol Linker (VIE) is moving to Blacksburg, and Ginger Hofer (VID) is moving to California; we will miss them. Emma Henri (RD) is back home recuperating from an illness. Sheila School (PWA) had successful heart valve surgery and is back home. Shirley White (PWA) is also doing well following her heart procedure. Therese Martin (RE) is back from traveling in Maine and the Outer Banks in August and early September. Leslie Vandivere (CHD) is back from visiting France and the beach during the month of August. Olga Hernandez (CHD) took a short trip to Rome at the end of September. The (SPF) unit will hold its annual book sale at its November unit meeting. (See host page for time, date and location.) Everyone is invited to attend.

SILENT WITNESS INITIATIVE

Barbara Nunes

A group of women artist and writers, upset about the growing number of women in Minnesota being murdered by their partners or acquaintances, began this program in 1990. They joined together with other women's organizations to form the Arts-Action Against Domestic Violence.

One of the results was the creation of 26 freestanding life-sized red wooden figures with the name of a woman on each one whose life was ended violently by a husband, ex-husband, partner, or acquaintance. A 27th figure was added to represent the uncounted women whose murders were unsolved or ruled accidental, perhaps erroneously.

In February 1991 more than 500 women met at a church across from the Minnesota State Capitol. Escorting the 27 witness figures, the women marched across the street into the State Capitol Rotunda for a press conference.

As of March 1997, forty-six states have joined the initiative. Hope was born for healing to continue until there is no more domestic violence. More information is available at www.silentwitness.net.

Community

Election Projects

Una White 703-922-8721
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Both of the election projects held in October, RCC and the Woodlake Towers Condominium, went off without any hitches. Thanks to all who volunteered their time. The Directors of both projects did a great job of making it all work so well with their up-front preparation, they are to be commended for their efforts.

'No Child Left Behind' Costs

Virginia school districts and the state have spent more than \$61 million in the past year to cover the costs of the NCLB law because the federal government has failed to fully fund the Bush administration mandate, according to a study presented to the state Board of Education

The study looked at costs at the state and local levels, including those incurred developing standardized tests, tracking scores of thousands of students, finding and keeping qualified teachers, and imposing sanctions on schools that fail to meet the benchmarks.

It found that the Virginia Department of Education and local school divisions spent an estimated \$264 million on law-related expenses last year. That's 23 percent more than they received in new federal dollars meant to cover the costs.

At the local level, the study found that school divisions spent \$207 per student. But because of the federal funding short-fall, districts picked up \$52.80 per student. The study was conducted by state officials and a Denver consulting firm.

Source: *The Washington Post*, Week in Review 9/25/05, C4.

Mark Your Calendars

The General Meeting will be held on Saturday, January 21, 2005 at the International Country Club in Chantilly. There will be one menu served. Special dietary needs can be accommodated

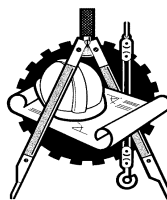
The Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2006 at the Heart'N Hand restaurant in Clifton. We will celebrate our 60th Anniversary with a special program.

Leslie Vandivere 703-222-4173
L.Vandivere@cox.net

Please welcome the following new local members: Joy M. Bryan(DU), Charleen C. Deasy (RD), Kathleen Hess (PWA), Joan Kadonoff (McL), Carol Korb (PWA), Sue B. Stolcis (GSV). And the following nationally recruited members: Jane Deese, Jennifer Elsea, and Kathryn Ives.

September Program Report on Redistricting

Susan Dill



All 15 units provided some type of report. Every unit that reported on the program found the study informative and interesting. A few members found the study dry, and that it did not provoke interest in the topic for them. Most members asked for further information on the various plans mentioned, Iowa in particular. One unit asked for a consensus (which is planned for next year). Sally Ormsby seemed to be a big hit in all the units where she was resource. All requests for further details, questions, and unit reports will be sent to the committee. PWA units really enjoyed the appetizer questions at the beginning of the meeting. One of their members volunteered to help with the committee, and they want more educating of the public on this issue through newspaper and radio spots.

STILL LOOKING FOR LEAGUERS!

We have several vacancies on Boards and Commissions in Fairfax County for LWVFA representatives. Please call or email the office if you are interested in taking on any of these tasks:

- FCPS Gifted & Talented Advisory Committee
- Vienna Town Council observer
- Public Relations Director for LWVFA

Thank you, Lea Arabia, for agreeing to serve on the FCPS Human Services Advisory Council.

Membership Update

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Compiled from the Internet by Rona Ackerman, Lea Arabia, Irene Lague, Sarah Mayhew, Shirley Olson

The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations sets as one of the Organization's central goals the reaffirmation of "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women." By the terms of the Charter, all members of the United Nations are legally bound to strive toward the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights define the value and worth of each person and their relationship to society. They identify standards regarding the quality of life that each of us can expect to enjoy. Human rights are inherent: they belong to us simply because we exist as human beings. Human rights are inalienable: they stay with us for as long as we live. Human rights are universal: they belong to everyone, irrespective of their sex, race, color, religion, national or social origin or other status.

The International Bill of Human Rights and other human rights treaties lay down a comprehensive set of rights to which all persons, including women, are entitled. But, due to social structures, traditions, stereotypical assumptions and attitudes about women and their role in society, women do not always have the same opportunity and ability as men to access and enforce their rights. In 1963, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to prepare a draft declaration that would combine, in a single instrument, international standards articulating the equal rights of men and women. In 1967, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a document without the contractual force of a treaty.

In 1974, the CSW decided, in principle, to prepare a single, comprehensive and internationally binding instrument to eliminate discrimination against women. The text was prepared by working groups within CSW during 1976 and deliberated extensively by a working group of the UN General Assembly from 1977 to 1979. The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 by a vote of

130 to none, with 10 abstentions.

On 17 July 1980, 64 Member States signed the Convention and two Member States submitted their instruments of ratification. On 3 September 1981, 30 days after the twentieth Member State had ratified it, the Convention entered into force - faster than any previous human rights convention had done. As of 18 March 2005, 180 countries - over ninety percent of the members of the United Nations - are party to the Convention. The nations who have not ratified the Convention are Brunei Darussalam, Cook Islands, Iran, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the United States.

What is an International Human Rights Convention?

An international human rights convention (or treaty) is a collection of human rights standards that has been put into the form of an agreement between different countries of the world. Once a national government ratifies a convention, the government is bound to the convention's terms.

Governments agree to ensure that the people living within their boundaries are able to access and enforce the rights within the convention. A government then becomes subject to the scrutiny of the United Nations, including by special committees set up under the convention, other governments, and NGOs (non-governmental organizations), for its actions in implementing human rights. Governments can use many strategies to implement an international human rights convention. Merely creating new laws is not an effective way to change social practices and attitudes that are often responsible for human rights violations. Other important strategies include ensuring that human rights are properly enforced by providing resources and assistance, access to courts and appropriate punishment for violations; and providing education and awareness-raising programs about human rights.

What Rights are in CEDAW?

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defines

what constitutes discrimination against women and sets a framework for national action to end such discrimination. It is the first international treaty to comprehensively address fundamental rights for women in politics, health care, education, economics, employment, law, property, and marriage and family relations.

Definition of Discrimination

Article 1: 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 marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women, of human rights or fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.”

Law, Policy and Prejudices:

Article 2: Mandates that States Parties **condemn discrimination** in all its forms and to ensure a legal framework including all laws, policies and practices that provides protection against discrimination and embodies the principle of equality.

Article 3: Requires States Parties to **take action in all fields—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural—to guarantee women’s human rights.**

Article 4: Permits States Parties to take “**temporary special measures**” to accelerate equality.

Article 5: Declares the need to take appropriate measures to modify cultural patterns of conduct, as well as the need for family education to recognize the social function of motherhood and the **common responsibility for raising children.**

Exploitation and Prostitution

Article 6: Obligates States Parties to take measures to **suppress the trafficking of women** and the exploitation of prostitution of women.

Politics and Public Life:

Article 7: Mandates States Parties end discrimination against women in political and public life and ensure women’s **equal rights to vote**, be eligible for election, participate in the formulation of policy, **hold office**, and participate in associations and non-governmental organizations.

Article 8: Requires measures allowing women to **represent their governments** internationally on an equal basis with men.

Nationality:

Article 9: Mandates that women have equal rights with men to acquire, change, or retain their **nationality** and that of their children.

Education and Training:

Article 10: Obligates States Parties to end discrimination in education, including in professional and vocational training, access to curricula and other means of receiving an **equal education** as well as to **eliminate stereotyped concepts** of the roles of men and women.

Employment:

Article 11: Mandates the end of discrimination in the field of employment, including the **right to work**, employment opportunities, **equal remuneration**, free choice of profession and employment, **social security**, and protection of health, including maternal health, and also in regard to discrimination on the grounds of marriage or maternity.

Health:

Article 12: Requires steps to eliminate discrimination in **health care**, including access to services such as **family planning.**

Economic Life, Sport and Culture:

Article 13: Requires that women be ensured the same rights as men in all areas of social and economic life, such as **family benefits, mortgages, bank loans**, and participation in **recreational activities and sports.**

Women Living in Remote and Rural Areas:

Article 14: Focuses on the particular problems faced by **rural women**, including the areas of women’s participation in development planning, access to adequate **health care, credit, education, and adequate living conditions.**

Equality Before the Law:

Article 15: Obligates States Parties to take steps to ensure **equality before the law** and the same legal capacity to act in such areas as **contracts**, administration of **property**, and choice of **residence.**

Family Relations:

Article 16: Requires steps to ensure **equality in marriage and family relations**, including equal rights with men to **freely choose marriage**, equal rights and responsibilities toward children, including the right to **freely determine the number and spacing of children** and the means to do so, and the same rights to **property.**

Administrative:

Article 17: Calls for the establishment of the **Committee** on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to evaluate progress made in implementation of the Convention.

Article 18: Establishes a **schedule for reporting** on progress by ratifying countries.

Article 19: Allows the CEDAW Committee to adopt **procedural rules** and sets a two-year term for its officers.

Article 20: Sets **annual CEDAW meetings** to review States Parties' reports.

Article 21: Directs the CEDAW Committee to report annually to the General Assembly and to make **suggestions and general recommendations** based on the States Parties' reports.

Article 22: Allows for representation of **specialized agencies** of the U.N. and for CEDAW to invite reports from them.

Articles 23-30: Outlines elements for **operation and enforcement of the treaty**, permissible reservations, and how disputes between States Parties can be settled.

The CEDAW Committee:

The CEDAW Committee is made up of twenty-three experts on women's rights who are nominated and elected by CEDAW States Parties for four-year terms. Although nominated by governments, members of the CEDAW Committee serve in their individual capacities, not as government representatives. Countries that have ratified CEDAW are committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures taken to comply with their treaty obligations. The Committee reviews those reports and assesses the Convention's implementation. The Committee annually reports to the United Nations General Assembly on its activities and makes recommendations to States Parties based on the evaluation of their reports to the Committee.

What is the Optional Protocol?

Optional Protocols, which allow States Parties to opt for additional provisions to a treaty, exist under several international conventions. Established in 2000, CEDAW's Optional Protocol is a procedure for handling complaints about a breach of rights. It offers two mechanisms to hold governments accountable for their obligations under CEDAW: (1) a communications procedure, which provides individuals and

groups the right to lodge complaints with the CEDAW Committee; and (2) an inquiry procedure, which enables the CEDAW Committee to conduct inquiries into serious and systematic abuses of women's rights. To bring a complaint, it must first be shown that all remedies available through the law in that country have been exhausted. These mechanisms are only applicable in countries that are States Parties to the Optional Protocol. As of 15 September 2004, 72 countries have acceded to the Optional Protocol.

How Does CEDAW Work?

The Convention commits ratifying nations to overcoming barriers to discrimination against women. It has no enforcement authority and requires only a periodic report and review process. In many of the countries that have ratified the treaty, it has guided the passage and enforcement of national law. For example, India developed national guidelines on workplace sexual assault after the Supreme Court, in ruling on a major rape case, found that CEDAW required such protections. But, where domestic laws diverge from the treaty, countries also can express "reservations, understandings, and declarations."

What are Reservations?

Reservations are exceptions that States Parties make to a treaty, or provisions to which they will not adhere. The Convention permits ratification subject to reservations, provided that the reservations are not incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. A number of States Parties enter reservations to particular articles on the grounds that national law, tradition, religion or culture are not congruent with Convention principles.

Articles 2 and 16 are considered by the Committee to be core provisions of the Convention. It considers reservations to both Articles impermissible and is concerned at the number and extent of reservations entered to those Articles. The Committee considers States Parties which have entered reservations to have certain options open to them: (a) After having examined the finding in good faith, maintain its reservation; (b) Withdraw its reservation; (c) "Regularize" its situation by replacing its impermissible reservation with a permissible reservation; (d) Renounce being a party to the Treaty. To date, few reservations to Article 2 have been withdrawn or modified by any State Party and reservations to Article 16 are rarely withdrawn.

The Committee has certain responsibilities as the body of experts charged with the consideration of periodic reports submitted to it. The Committee, in its examination of States Parties' reports, enters into constructive dialogue with the State Party and makes concluding comments routinely expressing concern at the entry of reservations, in particular to articles 2 and 16, or the failure of States Parties to withdraw or modify them. Removal or modification of reservations, particularly to articles 2 and 16, would indicate a State Party's determination to remove all barriers to women's full equality. The full text of Articles 2 and 16 follow:

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 16

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to

eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

The United States and CEDAW

The United States treaty ratification process requires that the President sign the treaty and then submit it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for advice and consent to ratification. Once the Foreign Relations Committee votes in favor of the treaty, it must be voted upon by the full Senate during the same Congressional session. A two-thirds vote of the full Senate is required to approve the treaty. Finally, the President must sign it.

During the Carter Administration, the United States strongly supported and played an active role in the

process that led to the creation of CEDAW. President Carter signed the treaty on July 17, 1980, and sent it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in November 1980 for advice and consent to ratification. The Committee held hearings on CEDAW in 1988 and 1990 but did not proceed to a Committee vote because neither the Reagan Administration nor the first Bush Administration supported ratification.

In the spring of 1993, 68 senators signed a letter to President Clinton asking him to take the necessary steps to ratify CEDAW. In June 1993, Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna that the Clinton Administration would pursue CEDAW and other human rights treaties. In September 1994, the treaty was favorably reported out of the Foreign Relations Committee by a vote of 13 to 5, with one abstention. This vote occurred in the last days of the Congressional session. Several senators put a hold on the treaty, thereby blocking the ratification vote on the Senate floor. When the Senate convened in January 1995, the treaty reverted back to the Foreign Relations Committee, where no further action was taken.

In September 1995, at the U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing, the U.S. made ratification by 2000 one of its public commitments. In June 1997 the Clinton Administration informed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of its priorities for ratification of international treaties in the 105th Congress. CEDAW was the only human rights treaty listed in Category 1: Treaties for which there is an urgent need for Senate approval; but it was not reported out of Committee.

Momentum for the treaty grew again in 2002 when Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE) became Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee. In a letter to the Committee dated February 7, 2002, the Department of State placed CEDAW in Category III—those treaties which the Bush Administration “believes are generally desirable and should be approved.” Chairman Biden therefore proceeded with plans for a hearing on the treaty. Between March and June 2002, the Foreign Relations Committee attempted to schedule testimony from State Department officials. Letters from the Departments of State and Justice urged that the Committee delay consideration of the Convention until a review was completed but reiterated the Administra-

tion’s support for ratification of the Convention. Because of the limited time remaining in the 107th Congress, and because the Administration could not provide any information about when its review would be completed, Chairman Biden proceeded with a hearing in mid-June. On July 30, 2002, the Committee considered the Convention, and ordered it favorably reported by a vote of 12-7. Ayes: Senators Biden, Sarbanes, Dodd, Kerry, Feingold, Wellstone, Boxer, Torricelli, Nelson, Rockefeller, Smith, and Chafee. Nays: Senators Helms, Lugar, Hagel, Frist, Allen, Brownback, and Enzi. The Committee recommended that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of the Convention, subject to 4 reservations, 5 understandings, and 2 declarations set forth in the resolution of advice and consent to ratification. However, CEDAW was not considered by the full Senate before the 107th Congress was adjourned. It has not been acted upon by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since that time.

What are the Reservations, Understandings and Declarations?

The Clinton Administration undertook a thorough review of the Convention, and recommended that the Senate include nine conditions (four reservations, three understandings, and two declarations) in the resolution of advice and consent. The 2002 resolution recommended by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee included two other conditions: an understanding first proposed by Senator Helms in 1994 related to abortion, and an understanding proposed by Senator Biden in 2002 related to the CEDAW Committee.

RESERVATIONS

(1) The Constitution and laws of the United States establish extensive protections against discrimination, reaching all forms of governmental activity as well as significant areas of non-governmental activity. However, individual privacy and freedom from governmental interference in private conduct are also recognized as among the fundamental values of our free and democratic society. The United States understands that by its terms the Convention requires broad regulation of private conduct, in particular under Articles 2, 3 and 5. The United States does not accept any obligation under the Convention to enact legislation or to take any other action with respect to private conduct except as mandated by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

(2) Under current U.S. law and practice, women are permitted to volunteer for military service without restriction, and women in fact serve in all U.S. armed services, including in combat positions. However, the United States does not accept an obligation under the Convention to assign women to all military units and positions which may require engagement in direct combat.

(3) U.S. law provides strong protections against gender discrimination in the area of remuneration, including the right to equal pay for equal work in jobs that are substantially similar. However, the United States does not accept any obligation under this Convention to enact legislation establishing the doctrine of comparable worth as that term is understood in U.S. practice.

(4) Current U.S. law contains substantial provisions for maternity leave in many employment situations but does not require paid maternity leave. Therefore, the United States does not accept an obligation under Article 11(2)(b) to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances.

UNDERSTANDINGS

(1) The United States understands that this Convention shall be implemented by the Federal Government to the extent that it exercises jurisdiction over the matters covered therein, and otherwise by the State and local governments. To the extent that State and local governments exercise jurisdiction over such matters, the Federal Government shall, as necessary, take appropriate measures to ensure the fulfillment of this Convention.

(2) The Constitution and laws of the United States contain extensive protections of individual freedom of speech, expression, and association. Accordingly, the United States does not accept any obligation under this Convention, in particular under Articles 5, 7, 8 and 13, to restrict those rights, through the adoption of legislation or any other measures, to the extent that they are protected by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

(3) The United States understands that Article 12 permits States Parties to determine which health care services are appropriate in connection with family planning, pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, as well as when the provision of free services is necessary, and does not mandate the provision of particular services on a cost-free basis.

(4) Nothing in this Convention shall be construed to reflect or create any right to abortion and in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning.

(5) The United States understands that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women was established under Article 17 “for the purpose of considering the progress made in the implementation” of the Convention. The United States understands that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, as set forth in Article 21, reports annually to the General Assembly on its activities, and “may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States Parties.” Accordingly, the United States understands that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has no authority to compel actions by States Parties.

DECLARATIONS

(1) The United States declares that, for purposes of its domestic law, the provisions of the Convention are non-self-executing.

(2) With reference to Article 29(2), the United States declares that it does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Article 29(1). The specific consent of the United States to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice concerning disputes over the interpretation or application of this Convention is required on a case-by-case basis.

Pros and Cons According to the Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee in 2002

The following information was culled from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report (including minority opposition reports) dated September 6, 2002.

Pros - The Majority View

1) Ratification will reaffirm the commitment of the United States before the eyes of the world to the principle of equality between men and women and to the promotion and protection of women’s rights at home and abroad. The failure of the United States to ratify undercuts the effectiveness of our message in promoting women’s rights.

2) Ratification will enhance the ability of the United States to press for women’s rights globally. It will give our diplomats a means to press other governments to fulfill their obligations under the Convention.

3) With the United States adding its voice in promoting adherence to CEDAW obligations, women in

many countries will be empowered and encouraged to press vigorously for fulfillment of CEDAW obligations.

Cons - The Minority View

1) No hearings on the Convention were held between September 27, 1994 and June 13, 2002. Action should have been deferred until after completion of the Executive Branch analysis of the implications for domestic and international law since 1994. The reservations, understandings, and declarations do not represent the view of the current administration and the resolution was developed without hearing any Administration witnesses.

2) The Convention has implications for U.S. compliance with regard to important social issues such as abortion on demand (including restrictions on Federal funding), comparable worth salary laws, women in the military, same-sex marriage, health care, single-sex education and potential government intrusion into areas traditionally within the scope of family privacy.

3) It is through the personal heroism and sacrifice of American forces, not a multilateral treaty, that Afghan women have been relieved of the burden of an oppressive, anti-woman government whose equally lawless predecessor signed CEDAW in 1980.

4) Ratification of CEDAW will help lawyers and other pro-abortion advocates reach the goal of enshrining unrestricted access to abortion in the United States. Abortion activists will work to use CEDAW to neutralize the democratic will of federal and state legislators. The treaty will also be used to erode other traditional prerogatives of the states by intruding in issues like marriage and child-rearing.

5) The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women prepares reports and recommendations to State Parties. If the Senate ratifies this Convention, the United States would subject itself to criticism and condemnation by this Committee and we need to understand the basis, practical effect, and any possible implications of the reports.

The Bush Administration's View

Excerpts from letter from Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, to Senator Biden, July 8, 2002:

Addressing the issues confronting women—from suffrage to gender-based violence—is a priority of this Administration. We are committed to ensuring that promotion of the rights of women is fully integrated into American foreign policy. Our recent actions in

Afghanistan underscore this commitment to promote the rights of girls and women who suffered under the draconian Taliban rule, including in education, employment, healthcare, and other areas. It is for these and other reasons that the Administration supports CEDAW's general goal of eradicating invidious discrimination against women across the globe.

The vagueness of the text of CEDAW and the record of the official U.N. body that reviews and comments on the implementation of the Convention, on the other hand, raise a number of issues that must be addressed before the United States Senate provides its advice and consent. We believe consideration of these issues is particularly necessary to determine what reservations, understandings and declarations may be required as part of the ratification process.

As you are aware, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women prepares reports and recommendations to State Parties. Portions of some of these reports and recommendations have addressed serious problems in useful and positive ways, such as women and girls who are victims of terrorism (Algeria) and trafficking in women and girls (Burma). However, other reports and recommendations have raised troubling questions in their substance and analysis, such as the Committee's reports on Belarus (addressing Mother's Day), China (legalized prostitution), and Croatia (abortion).

State Parties have always retained the discretion on whether to implement any recommendations made by the Committee. The existence of this body of reports, however, has led us to review both the treaty and the Committee's comments to understand the basis, practical effect, and any possible implications of the reports. We are also examining those aspects of the treaty that address areas of law that have traditionally been left to the individual states.

Can CEDAW Be Implemented Locally?

As of March 2004, California, Connecticut (Senate), Florida (House), Hawaii, Illinois (House), Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island (General Assembly), South Dakota (House), Vermont, Wisconsin (Senate), and the Territory of Guam have endorsed CEDAW or have adopted it on behalf of their jurisdictions. Eighteen counties and forty-four cities have also passed resolutions.

In its Resolution of February 15, 2000, Cook County, IL, urged the Senate to ratify CEDAW whereas the County itself continues to address the equality, rights and dignity of all people as envisioned in CEDAW through the work of its Commission on Women's Issues, its policy on sexual harassment, its Human Rights Ordinance, its many domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, its ongoing outreach to provide basic health care to women of all communities, and its commitment to women owned business enterprises and equal employment opportunities at all levels of government.

Los Angeles City adopted a Resolution on March 15, 2000 which declares that the City adopts and implements the principles of CEDAW; declares it will not discriminate against women and girls in the areas of employment practices, allocation of funding and delivery of direct and indirect services; and resolves that the principles of CEDAW be adopted and included as a part of the City's ongoing federal and state legislative program.

San Francisco has gone a step further and has begun to implement CEDAW into its laws. In April 1998, San Francisco became the first city in this country to adopt an ordinance implementing CEDAW locally. They began by conducting a gender analysis in two departments and the different needs of the population they serve and employ. The departments reviewed the analysis results to evaluate the department's adherence to the principles of CEDAW. They then made recommendations on how the departments could better protect and promote women's human rights through their operations.

Conclusion

Over 90% of the United Nations' Member States have ratified CEDAW. For many women around the world, CEDAW is the best avenue for realizing the human rights women in the United States take for granted. What makes CEDAW so controversial in the United States that it has not been ratified by the Senate in 25 years? This will be addressed in our November 12 forum, part of a series of forums on "Women Engaging Globally." This is a program of the League of Women Voters Education Fund, the Center for Women Policy Studies and the Women's Environment and Development Organization, made possible through a generous grant from the Open Society Institute - DC Office. It is locally co-sponsored by the

League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area Education Fund.

Moderator: Christianne Klein,
Weekend Anchor, WJLA

Panelists (*partial list*):

Sarah Albert, Public Policy Director, General Federation of Women's Clubs; Co-Chair, Working Group on the Ratification of CEDAW

Penny Wakefield, Civil and human rights lawyer; Steering Committee, Working Group on the Ratification of CEDAW

Wendy Wright, Executive Vice President, Concerned Women for America

References: (All websites accessed September 2005)

<<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>> United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women

<<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm>> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

<<http://www.womenstreaty.org>> Working Group on Ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

<http://www.cedaw.org/CEDAW_Book.htm> CEDAW: Rights that Benefit the Entire Community, Compiled and Edited by Leila Rassekh Milani, Sarah C. Albert and Karina Purushotma

<<http://www.unausa.org/site/pp.asp?c=fvKRI8MPJpF&b=379771>> United Nations Association of the United States of America

<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/sex_discrimination/cedaw/text.html> Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Sex Discrimination Commission, CEDAW Information Package

<<http://hrw.org/campaigns/cedaw>> Human Rights Watch

Foreign Relations Committee Report (Including the "Opposition Minority Report") [DOCID: f:er009.107] From the Executive Reports Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov] 107th Congress: Exec. Report SENATE: 2d Session, 107-9 CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN September 6, 2002.—Ordered to be printed

<<http://www.cookctyclerk.com/agendas/2000/Feb15/resdoc.htm>> Cook County Resolution on CEDAW

<<http://www.lacity.org/csw/html/cswpgE3d.htm>> Los Angeles City Resolution in Support of CEDAW

<<http://www.co.santacruz.ca.us/commissions/womens/minutes/cedawfactsheet.htm>> County of Santa Cruz, Women's Commission, CEDAW Fact Sheet

Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc (CASA)

Therese Martin

The Fairfax Criminal Justice Advisory Board, heard a presentation earlier this year about the CASA program from Lynda Williams, its executive director. The purpose of CASA is to recruit, train, and support volunteers who serve as advocates for children whose families have been cited for abuse and neglect.

In 1977, a judge in Seattle, Washington established the first CASA program. He conceived of the idea to use trained advocates to speak for children who appeared in court. The program became such a success that there are now close to 1,000 similar programs throughout the country with more than 70,000 volunteers.

In 1989, Fairfax County started its CASA program and it is currently the largest of the 27 programs in Virginia based on the number of volunteers and the volume of children it serves. Each volunteer may only have one case at a time, although a case may involve several children who are related. An average case lasts approximately 18 months.

The CASA volunteer is "a collector and observer of information," who provides the judge with a report obtained from the child, his or her parents, family members, social workers, school officials, and others who may be knowledgeable about the child and makes a recommendation to the judge as to how the case should proceed. The report may include whether it is in the best interests of the child to stay with his or her parents or guardians, be placed in foster care, or placed for adoption. The goal is to provide the child with a "safe, permanent, and loving home."

CASA volunteers come from all walks of life with a variety of professional, educational, and ethnic backgrounds. They are required to take a comprehensive training course which consists of approximately 35 hours of training on various topics. Volunteers are also required to take twelve hours of additional in-service training per year to remain active.

Fairfax needs more money and volunteers in order to fulfill its mission successfully. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer or making a donation may contact CASA at 4103 Chain Bridge Rd, Suite 200, Fairfax 22030, 703-273-3526 or www.casafairfax.org.

VIRGINIA HAPPENINGS

Colonial Capital

Bernice Colvard, League Historian

In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon, Jr. (leader of "Bacon's Rebellion") burned Jamestown to the ground. The statehouse at Jamestown burned again in 1698 and **the colonial capital shifted to Williamsburg** where the legislature initially met at the College of William & Mary's Wren Building.

Determined to thwart the menace of fire, the Burgesses decreed that their new Statehouse be created with no chimneys; the use of fire, candles, or tobacco was forbidden. The building became so cold and damp that papers began to mildew. The needed chimneys were added by 1723 and candles and smoking permitted. This building was completely gutted by fire in 1747 and again in 1832, after the government had moved to Richmond (1779).

The H-shaped Williamsburg building was well-suited to the needs of Virginia's government with a separate wing for the House of Burgesses and the other for the General Court. The Council met on the second floor, which also had committee meeting rooms.

Nearly every 18th century Virginian of note would meet here, and much American history took place within its walls. Washington was lauded for his heroic action in the French & Indian War. Patrick Henry made his famous Caesar-Brutus speech and was accused of treason by some. George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights was passed here in 1776. The first elected governor of the commonwealth, Patrick Henry, was elected here that same year. The building has been reconstructed and is part of the Colonial Williamsburg enclave.

Extensive renovation of the state capitol building as well as huge excavation in Capitol Square in Richmond preclude using that site for the next gubernatorial inauguration in January 2006. **Those ceremonies will once again be held in the colonial capitol in Williamsburg where Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson were sworn in over 200 years ago.**

Sources: Ginsberg, Steven, et al, and Associated Press. METRO in Brief. The Washington Post. 2/26/05.

Smith, Jane Ockenshausen, *One-Day Trips Through History*. EPM Pubs, McLean, VA, 1982, pp 128-129.

Well-behaved women never make history.

Maria Shriver

Human Relations Advisory Committee (HRAC) Report

M.J. Cronin

Each school year, the Fairfax County School Board charges HRAC on a subject of concern to them. In the 2004-05 school year, it was to gather information on how the human relations policy is being implemented. Following is a summary of the data collected from all school principals.

- How mandated HRACs were faring showed 83.6 percent had an active committee in lower grades than with high schools. Most HRACs do not issue annual reports or make recommendations to the principal as required by the regulation.
- While broad representation on the committee is a requirement, many don't include students and only about half had parents. On the positive side, the committees fostered respect for diversity and did so through International Nights and other programs.
- A majority of principals responded on the usefulness of HRACs to them. They noted that when HRACs deal with specific issues of concern to the school, it is helpful. A number of principals asked for more direction on goals, expectations and membership to improve usefulness of HRACs.
- On the question of what issues come to the attention of the committees, 61.4 percent listed cultural sensitivity and 56.7 percent listed communications. Other issues such as bullying and cheating were mentioned.
- A question on best practices in other school systems found that stress was placed on providing administrators with a broad outline of objectives and guidelines to improve human relations rather than mandating committees.

What the School Board can do to ensure that human relations remain viable and valuable. These responses, in conjunction with HRAC's discussion of issues, led to four recommendations that follow:

1. Have HRACs covered with separate regulation or policy statement. It is now part of a broader regulation on personnel issues and employment legislation.
2. Provide a clear statement of the goals etc of a HRAC so that its usefulness is more apparent to principals.

3. Elevate the importance of human relations, it should be part of performance evaluation or cluster meeting agendas.
4. Staff training to produce better communications and response to increasing diversity of the school community.

Women Build

Fauquier Habitat for Humanity (FHFH) is constructing a home built entirely by women. Working every Saturday, and even some Tuesdays as needed to stay on schedule, a group of about 140 women is constructing the home for a single mom and her children.

The concept of Women Build is to encourage and empower women to be active participants in all aspects of home construction. The project provides an environment where women can feel comfortable learning skills they might not otherwise have the opportunity to learn.

Women are responsible for raising the money, organizing events, scheduling volunteers, and constructing the entire home. Before beginning the project, the women attended bi-monthly training sessions. They learned everything needed from start to finish including basic construction techniques, framing walls, roofing, drywall, electrical and plumbing, cabinet installation and painting.

In 1991, a group of women in Charlotte, NC, completed the first women-built house. Since then, women crews have built more than 650 Habitat houses in the United States. For more information about this visit www.habitat.org/wb

Source: No. Va. Electric Cooperative, June 2005.

Turkey Pardon



Each Thanksgiving, turkeys are presented to the President by the National Turkey Federation. The presentation of a turkey to the president dates from the Lincoln administration, but the pardoning ceremony, held each year, started in the 40s during the Truman years. The pardoned turkeys go to live out the rest of their lives at Kidwell Farm in Frying Pan Park in Fairfax County.

Source: Fairfax Extra, *The Washington Post*, 11/25/04

Unit Meeting Locations - Topic: CEDAW

Members and visitors may attend any meeting convenient for them. At print time the locations were correct, *please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend.* Some meetings at restaurants need reservations.

Tuesday, November 15

Wednesday, November 9

Thursday, November 10

9:45 am Annandale/Barcroft (AB)

Mason District Govt. Center
6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale
Call Mary 703-207-9167 for info.

12:30 pm McLean (McL)

No Meeting

7:45 pm Vienna Evening (VE)

No Meeting

Monday, November 14

1:30 pm Greenspring Vill. (GSV)

Hunters Crossing Craft Room
Spring Village Drive, Springfield
Call Jean 703-569-6659 for info.

Friends Help Longevity

Having a broad network of good friends increases the likelihood you will live longer than average. Having close family ties does not. A 10-year study that monitored the personal and telephone contacts of almost 1,500 people in Adelaide, Australia, came to that surprising conclusion. Friends can have effects on depression, self-efficacy, self-esteem, coping and morale, or sense of personal control. While family contact can have some of those effects. The fact that people can't choose family members but do choose their friends appears to make a significant difference.

Source: Kaufman, Marc. Science Note.
The Washington Post, p.A5, 6/20/05

9:30 am Fairfax Station (FXS)

7902 Bracksford Ct. Fairfax Station
Call Lois 703-690-0908 for info.

9:30 am Hollin Hills Day (HHD)

Mount Vernon District Gov. Center
2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria
Call Joan 703-765-0799 for info.

1:30 pm Pr. William Area (PWA)

Bull Run Regional Library
8051 Ashton Avenue, Manassas.
Call Sheila 703-492-4574 for info.

6:15 pm Dinner Unit (DU)

No Meeting

7:30 pm Reston Evening (RE)

Reston Museum 1639 Washington Plaza, Lake Anne Village Center
Call Baba 703-437-1901 for info.

7:30 pm Pr. William Area (PWA)

Daks Restaurant
13641 Minnieville Road, Dale City
Come at 7:00 pm for dinner.
Call Sheila 703-492-4574 for info.

9:00 am Reston Day (RD)

Nancy Larson
1606 Greenbriar Court, Reston
703-437-4419.

9:15 am Fairfax City Day (FXD)

No Meeting

9:30 am Springfield (SPF)

Packard Center (Lg. Conf. Rm.)
4026 Hummer Rd, Annandale
Call Nancy 703-256-6570 or
Peg 703-256-9420 for info.

1:00 pm Chantilly/Herndon (CH)

Sully District Governmental Center
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.
Call Olga 703-815-1897 for info.

7:45 pm Hollin Hills Eve. (HHE)

7813 Evening Lane, Alexandria
Call Alice 703-360-7426 for info.

Saturday, November 12

12:00 Noon Vienna Day (VID)

Squire Rockwell Restaurant,
Before attending CEDAW Forum at
1:30 pm at NOVA

December Topic LWVUS & LWVFA Program Planning

