

Working Group on ratification
of the
U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

Co-Chair:

Leila R. Milani
NGO Liaison for Women's Issues
National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of the United States
1320 19th Street, N.W. Suite 701
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 833-8990 • fax: (202) 833-8988

Co-Chair:

Sarah Albert
Public Policy Director
General Federation of Women's Clubs
1734 N Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 347-3168 • fax: (202) 835-0246

May 30, 2002

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush,

We, the undersigned faith based organizations, are writing to ask for your support in promoting the human rights of women worldwide and the women of Afghanistan by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

This treaty provides a universal standard for women's human rights. It addresses discrimination in areas such as education, employment, marriage and family relations, health care, politics, finance and law. To date, 169 countries have ratified the treaty for the rights of women. The United States is the only industrialized nation that has failed to do so, and as such is in the company of countries such as Iran and Afghanistan.

In the last several months, the world has seen an even greater struggle for freedom and the promotion of fundamental human rights principles. We see the protection of women's rights as vital to the success of these efforts. There can be no civil society in Afghanistan without the full restoration of women's rights. The treaty for the rights of women is critical to ensuring that the future of Afghanistan will have a democratic government that includes equal rights for women and protects the human rights and freedoms of all its citizens.

As you noted last year, "repressed people around the world must know this about the United States... we will always be the world's leader in support of human rights." The United States should demonstrate its commitment to human rights by ratifying the treaty for the rights of women, the most comprehensive treaty ensuring the human rights of women - imperative for half of the world's population. Today, U.S. ratification will set the stage for U.S. leadership in ensuring women's human rights in the rebuilding of a

more democratic Central Asia. U.S. ratification will demonstrate the U.S. commitment to promoting and protecting equality for its own citizens.

We urge you to work to ensure immediate ratification of the treaty for the rights of women.

Sincerely,

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
Church of the Brethren Washington Office
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America
Institute Justice Office of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
NA'AMAT USA
National Council of Jewish Women
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
Peace Lutheran Church
Presbyterian Church (USA)
The American Jewish Committee
The Anglican Communion
The Episcopal Church USA
Unitarian Universalist Services Committee
United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society
Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods
Women's Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Nework

