Time to UNsign CEDAW

by Phyllis Schlafly February 14, 2007

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The sweetest Valentine Republican Senators could give to American women would be to announce that they will filibuster until Christmas if Senate Democrats try to ratify the offensive United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Signed by Jimmy Carter in 1980, and repeatedly promoted by Bill and Hillary Clinton, it has wisely never been ratified.

The notion is downright ridiculous that American women (the most fortunate class of people who ever lived) should submit to a treaty that dictates uniform rules for 185 other nations, all of which treat women worse than the United States. Ratification of CEDAW would be craven kowtowing to the radical feminists, exceeded only by the treaty's unlimited capacity for legal mischief.

Article 1 purports to abolish discrimination against women "in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." What other fields do the feminists have in mind?

Article 2 reiterates that the treaty would "eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise," including "laws, regulations, customs

and practices." Our "customs" should be none of our government's business, much less the business of the United Nations.

Article 3 would require us to pass new federal laws not only in political but also in "social, economic and cultural fields." Article 5 would require us "to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women" and to "ensure" that we are following United Nations dictates about "family education."

Article 10 would make it a federal responsibility to ensure "the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education . . . by the revision of textbooks and . . . teaching methods."

We certainly don't want the UN to revise our textbooks! Remember, the feminists consider it a stereotype that children should be raised by a mother and father married to each other.

Article 11 would chain us to the feminist goal that wages should be paid on subjective notions of "equal value" (i.e., the discredited notion of "comparable worth") rather than on the free market or on U.S. legal standards of equal pay for equal work. It would also require us to "establish" another long-time feminist goal, a federal "network of child-care facilities."

Article 12 would guarantee "access to health care services, including those related to family planning," and Article 16 would require us to allow women "to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children." CEDAW's committee in charge of compliance has interpreted this feminist jargon to mean approval of abortion, and has pressured 44 nations to legalize or increase access to abortion.

The monitoring committee in charge of "progress," which is created by Article 17, consists of "23 experts," on which the United States might some day have one vote

out of 23. The current committee includes representatives from Algeria, Cuba and Bangladesh and a vice chairman from Zimbabwe.

No doubt the "experts" will always be "experts" in feminist ideology and tactics. CEDAW's international "experts" have already issued negative reports about the practices of countries that were foolish enough to ratify the treaty.

The committee criticized Ireland for "promoting a stereotypical view of the role of women in the home and as mothers," Belarus for "such symbols as a Mother's Day" because it promotes "a negative cultural stereotype," and Slovenia because "less than 30 percent of children under three years of age were in formal day care." The committee recommended "the decriminalization of prostitution in China."

Article 16 also orders a massive interference with U.S. laws as well as with our federal-state balance of powers by obligating the federal government to take over all family law, including marriage, divorce, child custody, and marital property.

When Edmund S. Muskie was Secretary of State, he issued a memo stating that the treaty completely fails to take into account "the division of authority between the state and federal governments in the United States." His memo also admitted that this treaty applies "to private organizations and areas of personal conduct not covered by U.S. law."

CEDAW would give busybody global bureaucrats and activist judges extraordinary powers to revise U.S. laws, education and customs to comport with radical feminist ideology. If President Bush wants to re-establish friendly connections with pro-family voters, whom he conspicuously ignored in his State of the Union speech, he should UNsign this Carter-signed UN Treaty just as he UNsigned the Clinton-signed International Criminal Court Treaty.