
Executive Summary

The United States is one of seven countries and the only advanced industrialized country in the world that has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Being frustrated with the slow (or non-existent) pace of Senate ratification since 1981, the Cities for CEDAW campaign decided that American women can no longer wait for the U.S. Senate to act.

Cities for CEDAW is a national campaign which encourages American municipalities to adopt a CEDAW ordinance to enshrine the international gender norms of substantive gender equity and nondiscrimination into municipal codes. San Francisco was the first city to adopt a CEDAW ordinance in 1995 and today, seven cities have adopted CEDAW ordinances while 24 cities have CEDAW resolutions, including Boulder, Lafayette, and Louisville, in Colorado.

This report has been put together per request of Kimberly Desmond, the director of the Denver Office on Women and Families. The report focuses on two key questions: (1) how have other cities implemented a CEDAW ordinance; and (2) what kind of implementation is feasible for the City and County of Denver. The report includes a comparison between the City and County of Denver's administrative and political structure and cities with CEDAW ordinances.

The report also includes an implementation study of Miami-Dade County and the City of New Orleans as they were found to be the most comparable CEDAW Cities.

On the basis of these and other case studies and a comprehensive legal analysis of existing CEDAW ordinances, the United Nations Association Denver - Denver for CEDAW campaign comes to the following conclusions:

1. The adoption of a CEDAW ordinance should enshrine the principles of sex-based nondiscrimination and gender equality in the city's legal framework therefore safeguarding women's rights against any changes in leadership on the city or county level;
2. A CEDAW ordinance should
 - a. Include a periodic gender analysis of the status of women in Denver including a requirement that any data collected must be disaggregated by sex, race/ethnicity, and age;
 - b. Task the Denver Women's Commission with developing policy recommendation to the City Council and the Mayor's office based on the periodic gender analysis (and the Denver Women's Commission or the Office on Women and Families should monitor the implementation process of these recommendations); and
 - c. The City Council and Mayor should consider resource allocations of funds for staff, oversight, and/or implementation, and partner with universities, community groups, and CEDAW supporters to obtain private funding.