



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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ERA Enforced by the United Nations?

Having failed in their effort to persuade Americans to put the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) into the U.S. Constitution, despite spending tens of millions of dollars and enjoying the support of Big Media, three Presidents, and dozens of prominent politicians of both parties, the feminists are now trying to give us an even more dangerous ERA through ratification of a UN Treaty on Women enforced by busybody bureaucrats from foreign countries. This treaty has the pretentious label of 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, the U.S. Senate has wisely never ratified it.

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 far 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." The text doesn't use the word "abortion," but CEDAW's compliance committee has interpreted this feminist jargon to mean approval of abortion, and has pressured 37 nations to legalize or increase access to abortion. The CEDAW committee has held that nations should provide public funding of abortion, and has even criticized nations that have laws to allow medical professionals to opt out of providing abortions. The European Parliament in 2002 adopted a report calling for removal of all limitations to abortion, citing CEDAW as its authority. Some pro-abortion U.S. Senators claim that they can paper over this problem by inserting an "understanding," but an "understanding" in regard to a treaty has no legal force whatsoever. (For further information, see National Right to Life document, 2-1-07)

ARTICLE 17 creates a monitoring committee in charge of "progress." This 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, such as Hillary Clinton, Barbara Boxer, or a president of NOW.

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% 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 foreign bureaucrats and activist judges extraordinary powers to revise U.S. laws, education and customs to comport with radical feminist ideology.

Senator Jesse Helms kept CEDAW in the bottom drawer for years after it was signed by Jimmy Carter, but the new Democratic Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joe Biden, has dusted it off and is trying to get the Senate to ratify it. Tell your Senators to vote NO on CEDAW. Even better, tell President Bush to UNsign this Carter-signed UN Treaty just as he UNsigned the Clinton-signed International Criminal Court Treaty.

More Lobbying for More Feminist Pork

The feminists have cooked up a new plan to raid the U.S. Treasury for more feminist pork. They want Congress to pass the I-VAWA (International Violence Against Women Act). They are using a report issued in October 2006 by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called “In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence Against Women.” The report is said to be based on interviews with 24,000 women conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO report asserts that one in three of the world’s women, in some countries as many as 70%, experience violence in their lifetime, usually from their own partner, which is the rationale for calling it domestic violence. I’m surprised the feminists don’t claim 100%, since “violence” is broadly defined to include non-physical “psychological and economic” actions.

Senator Joe Biden (D-DE) says the “statistics are appalling.” Indeed they are. But it doesn’t follow that the solution is the UN “In-Depth” report’s demand for “consultation with women’s [*i.e.*, feminist] groups” with “adequate funding streams” to develop “international standards” for all nations. All UN projects pertaining to women follow the feminist model: break up the family, force women into the workforce, and send kids to daycare.

A new feminist front group called the Women’s Edge Coalition is partnering with Amnesty International U.S. to lobby for congressional passage of I-VAWA which, of course, would create millions of dollars of feminist pork. I-VAWA’s stated

mission is to carry out a campaign of policy advocacy and education, consulting with dozens of U.S. organizations, grassroots organizing, and working with strategic media partners (*i.e.*, getting the media to do their propagandizing).

You can bet that a primary purpose of I-VAWA money will be to lobby the U.S. Senate for ratification of CEDAW so that its UN monitoring committee can force U.S. compliance with feminist goals. That agenda includes everything from requiring unlimited abortion rights to rewriting our school textbooks to eliminate all so-called “stereotypes” and gender-specific references.

Our Senators are taunted with the assertion that the United States should be embarrassed because 185 countries have ratified CEDAW, while we have not. I’m glad the Senate so far has had the good sense to reject a treaty that fraudulently makes people believe it will improve the lot of Americans.

CEDAW has had no effect in stopping the horrible crimes against women that take place in so many non-Christian countries. Many of these countries persist in social norms that justify abuse against women, such as genital mutilation, forced marriage, honor killing, murder of unborn and born female babies, and polygamy. Ratification of CEDAW by their governments has done nothing to stop these atrocities.

Pakistan has ratified CEDAW. That’s the country where a tribal council ordered a young woman gang-raped to avenge her brother’s crime of being seen with an unchaperoned woman from another tribe. Gang rape is common in Pakistan.

Nigeria has ratified CEDAW. That’s a country where women are stoned to death for the crime of adultery. Islamic law, called Shariah, calls for death to women who commit adultery, but a lesser punishment for adulterous men.

Saudi Arabia has ratified CEDAW. That’s the country where 14 girls died inside a Mecca school that went up in flames. Religious police kept rescuers from entering the building because some of the girls were not wearing their head coverings. Colombia has ratified CEDAW. That’s a country where thousands of women a year are sold into sex slavery. Similar outrages take place in India, Nepal and Thailand, which have also ratified CEDAW.

All these countries are eligible to sit on CEDAW’s monitoring committee of 23 “experts” who monitor “progress” and order compliance. I-VAWA is based on the lie that violence against women is the same problem in the United States as in other countries and that “international standards” are the solution.

Any “international standards” would vastly diminish the rights and benefits American women now enjoy. American women, the most privileged class of people on the face of the earth, are the beneficiaries of the Judeo-Christian civilization, including the requirement in the Ten Commandments to honor mothers and the Christian religion that honors the Virgin Mary and respects women.

Tell your Members of Congress to vote No on I-VAWA.

ERA Is Still a Bad Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution, was voted out of Congress on March 22, 1972 and sent to the states for ratification. ERA was passionately debated across America from 1972 to 1982, rejected by the American people, and died at the end of its extended time limit on June 30, 1982.

ERA was born in the era of the women's suffrage amendment and first introduced into Congress in 1923. For nearly 50 years, all those Congresses had the good judgment to leave ERA buried in committee.

In 1971, the women's liberation movement burst on the scene with massive support from the media. Its leaders demanded that we change to a gender-neutral society in which we would all be forced to treat men and women exactly the same no matter how reasonable it might be to respect differences. These feminists chose ERA as their principal legislative goal so they could use the U.S. Constitution to force all Americans to accept a gender-neutral agenda.

A radical feminist organization called the National Organization for Women (NOW) stormed the halls of Congress, secured signers for a discharge petition, and forced ERA out for a vote. Apparently convincing many members of Congress that they represented **all** women, the House passed ERA by an overwhelming margin on October 21, 1971, and the Senate did likewise on March 22, 1972, sending ERA to the states and giving them seven years in which to pass ratification resolutions in 3/4ths of the states (38 is the necessary number to become part of the U.S. Constitution).

Women were falsely led to believe that ERA would put women in the U.S. Constitution. But as anyone can see from the text, ERA would not put women in the Constitution — it would put “sex” in the Constitution. The text of ERA is: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

ERA had a righteous name and incredible momentum. Within the first year, ERA was ratified by 30 states, and ERA needed only 8 more states to become part of the U.S. Constitution. Supporting ERA were all those who had pretensions to political power from left to right — from Ted Kennedy to George Wallace — and three Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter. ERA was actively supported by most of the pushy women's organizations, a consortium of 33 women's magazines, numerous Hollywood celebrities, and 99% of the media. There weren't any friendly TV and radio talk show hosts who now fill the airways, no Rush Limbaugh talking about feminazis, no Fox News, no “no spin zone.” We had no internet, no email, no fax machines.

But American women rejected ERA. Our Stop ERA campaign was launched with the February 1972 *Phyllis*

Schlafly Report called “What's Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?” Over the 10 years, I wrote nearly 100 issues of my *Report* about ERA, which staked out the battleground: the legal rights that women would lose if ERA were ever ratified.

We showed that ERA was a fraud. While pretending to benefit women, it actually would be a big takeaway of rights that women then possessed, such as the right of an 18-year-old girl not to be drafted and sent into military combat. We got our facts straight from the writings of the pro-ERA legal authorities: Yale Law School Professor Thomas I. Emerson's 100-page article in the *Yale Law Journal*, and ACLU lawyer Ruth Bader Ginsburg's 230-page book *Sex Bias in the U.S. Code* (posted at www.StopERA.com). Those documents confirmed our arguments that ERA would draft women into military combat, abolish the presumption that the husband should support his wife, take away Social Security benefits for wives and widows, and cause all kinds of legal mischief.

We showed that ERA would give enormous power to the federal courts to define the words in ERA: “sex” and “equality of rights.” Section 2 of ERA would give vast new powers to the Federal Government over all laws that allow traditional and reasonable differences of treatment on account of sex: marriage, property, divorce, alimony, adoptions, abortion, homosexual laws, sex crimes, private and public schools, Boy and Girl Scouts, prison regulations, and insurance.

The ERAers could not show **any** benefit to women, not even in employment, since employment laws were already sex-neutral. The ERAers said their Amendment would put women into the Constitution. But the Constitution doesn't mention men or women; it uses only sex-neutral words such as “we the people,” person, citizen, inhabitant, President and Senator.

The media were solidly hostile and never gave us equal time to debate the issues. But we did have equal time at state legislative hearings. Year after year in the 1970s, we presented legislators with the powerful arguments and documentation provided by the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*. I ultimately testified at 41 state hearings.

The military draft was a strong argument in the early years because we were just coming out of the Vietnam War. The ERAers, most of whom were well over draft age, claimed that they wanted girls to be drafted. That argument was hard to sell to young women who did not see it as a benefit to be forced to register for the military draft and serve in combat like men. Nor did wives see it as a benefit for ERA to make unconstitutional all state laws that make it the duty of the husband to support his wife.

From 1973 to 1975, the ERAers won only five more states, but five other states rescinded their previous ratifications, and

the ERAers were running out of time to win any more states.

International Women's Year (IWY) became the feminists' plan to win ratification in the remaining states. Bella Abzug was then a Member of Congress, and she got Congress to appropriate \$5 million for a tax-funded IWY convention in Houston in November 1977.

The International Women's Year convention opened in Houston, featuring every feminist you ever heard of; 3,000 members of the media were on hand to give them total press and television coverage.

But all that media coverage exposed to the American people the real goals of the feminists and the radical effects of ERA: taxpayer funding of abortions and the entire gay rights agenda. ERAers argue that since abortion happens only to women, it is sex discrimination to deny taxpayer funding for abortions. And, since the word used in ERA is "sex," not women, ERA would require us to grant same-sex marriage licenses. The International Women's Year conference in Houston proved that ERA's real agenda is taxpayer-funded abortions and special gay rights.

A couple of months later, a reporter asked the Governor of Missouri, "Governor, are you for ERA?" He replied, "Do you mean the old ERA or the new ERA? I was for equal pay for equal work, but after those women went down to Houston and got tangled up with the abortionists and the lesbians, I can tell you ERA will never pass in the Show Me State."

When the feminists realized time was running out and they could not win 38 states by the seven-year deadline, they ran for help to President Carter who, with Congress, gave them a crooked 3-year time extension.

Congress passed an ERA Time Extension to change "within seven years" in the original ERA resolution to 10 years, 3 months, 8 days, 7 hours and 35 minutes, so that the time limit was extended to June 30, 1982 instead of expiring on March 22, 1979. Congress passed this unfair Extension by only a simple majority vote instead of by the 2/3rds majority required for constitutional amendments. Political cartoonists had a field day, describing the Time Extension as giving three more innings to a baseball game that was not tied up.

The American people were so turned off by the dishonesty of the Time Extension that ERA never had another victory, even though ERA has since been voted on about 25 times, in state legislatures, in Congress, and in several state-wide referenda.

In a famous lawsuit called *Idaho v. Freeman*, the Federal Court ruled that the Time Extension was unconstitutional, and that the rescissions are constitutional. The decision was appealed. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on October 4, 1982 that the lawsuit was "moot" because ERA was **dead**, regardless of whether we use the original time limit of March 22, 1979 or the extension time limit of June 30, 1982.

Since then, the ERAers have repeatedly tried to revive

ERA. They re-introduced ERA in Congress in 1983 to start the process all over again, but were defeated in the U.S. House on November 15, 1983.

Then the ERAers tried to revive their momentum by passing ERA as state constitutional amendments. They failed in dramatic referendums in Maine in 1984, in Vermont in 1985, and in Iowa in 1992.

ERA advocates have now cooked up an incredibly dishonest plan. They are telling people that they can ignore the time limits put on ERA, both in its original text passed in 1972 and also in the Time Extension resolution passed in 1978, and that they can ignore the federal court decision in *Idaho v. Freeman*, and ignore the U.S. Supreme Court decision that ERA is dead, and then deceive three states into passing ERA ratification resolutions, and then get their friend Speaker Nancy Pelosi to declare ERA part of the U.S. Constitution. This is so outrageously dishonest that we wonder how anybody could argue it with a straight face.

The ERAers are presenting ERA in exactly the same text that has been voted down again and again, and rejected by the American people. **All** the same original arguments against it are still valid.

We now have a new generation of state legislators who don't remember the debates of the 1970s. It is important for Americans who care about our nation and its future to teach a new generation of Members of Congress and State Legislators why we do **not** want ERA in the U.S. Constitution. Eagle Forum has two new fliers to explain the evils of ERA.



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