

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8008

As of February 5, 1999

Brief Description: Urging the United States Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and to support the convention's continuing goals.

Sponsors: Senators Spanel, Brown, Kohl-Welles, Loveland, Fairley, Prentice, Thibaudeau, Snyder, Rasmussen, Wojahn, Shin, Heavey, Jacobsen, Fraser, Patterson, Haugen, Gardner, Goings, B. Sheldon, McAuliffe, Winsley, Costa, Franklin and Eide.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/8/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Penny Nerup (786-7484)

Background: In 1979, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This convention has been ratified by over 61 nations. The United States is the only industrialized nation that has not yet ratified the convention.

Summary of Bill: Washington State joins the legislatures of California, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, South Dakota, and Vermont in endorsing U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The convention mandates that nation-states condemn discrimination in their laws, policies and practices; requires action to guarantee women's human rights; permits temporary measures to accelerate equality; requests common responsibility for raising children; obligates nation-states to suppress traffic in women and exploitation of women through prostitution; mandates that women have equal rights to change their nationality; obligates nation-states to end discrimination in education, employment, health care, and in all areas of social and economic life, such as mortgages, bank loans, and sports; focuses on problems faced by rural women; and obligates nation-states to ensure equality before the law in areas such as contracts, administration of property, choice of residence, marital choice, and the number and spacing of children. The convention also establishes a committee to evaluate progress in implementing the convention and identifies its reporting responsibilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.