

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8001

As of February 4, 2005

Brief Description: Urging adoption of a treaty fighting discrimination against women.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Kohl-Welles, Franklin, Brown and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/3/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Cindy Fazio (786-7405)

Background: The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979. The Convention became an international treaty on September 3, 1981. By May, 2001, one hundred sixty-eight nations, including all of the industrialized world, except the United States, have agreed to be bound by the Convention's provisions.

Summary of Bill: President Bush and the Secretary of State are respectfully urged to place the Convention in the highest category of priority in order to accelerate the treaty's passage through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and full United States Senate with the goal of ratification by the United States. The Washington State Legislature exhorts the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to pass this treaty favorably out of Committee and urge it be approved by the full Senate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Testimony For: If the United States ratifies the Treaty, we will be in a position to influence the implementation review board. The Treaty's committee is advisory and the United States could work to improve the process. Individual countries who have signed the Treaty can implement it to suit their specific laws. For example, if prostitution is legal in a country, implementing health and safety regulations for that business would be consistent with the Treaty. It is very important for the United States to set an example around the world. There are many places in the world where conditions for women are dangerous. Many concerns for women envisioned by the Treaty have come true.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Dorothy Young Sale, League of Women Voters of Washington.