

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989, Universal Children's Day. It soon gathered participation from all the world's governments except for the United States and Somalia, which have not yet ratified it. The US Government led in drafting the CRC, and signed it in 1995, but the President has not yet sent it to the Senate for ratification.

Like the US Bill of Rights, the 54 Articles of the CRC set standards for children's rights. The basic rights of all children include:

- ✓ ***The right to survival;***
- ✓ ***The right to develop to the fullest potential;***
- ✓ ***The right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and***
- ✓ ***The right to participate in family, cultural, and social life.***

In addition, there are two Protocols to the CRC, which the US has ratified, that outlaw child soldiers and trafficking in children for sex or labor.

What you can do:

- ✓ ***Learn more about the CRC:*** Go to <http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/index.html> and understand that it is a global set of standards to live up to, not an immediate requirement for enforcement.
- ✓ ***Ask the President and your Senators to ratify the CRC,*** by telephone, e-mail, letter, or personal visits. We need 67 Senators' "yes" votes to ratify.
- ✓ ***Write letters to the editor or op-ed articles for your local newspapers.*** We need to get on people's radar.
- ✓ ***Initiate or support local and State CRC implementation efforts.*** We need to get a better track record of observing the CRC's standards.
- ✓ ***Join the Campaign!*** We welcome your name on our rolls and petitions, your participation in our work, and your financial support. Go to www.childrightscampaign.org

Campaign to Ratify the Children's Rights Convention

c/o Covenant House,
60 West 41st Street
New York, NY 10036-6801

Or e-mail to

info@childrightscampaign.org



The world's children share universal rights — except in the USA!

Join the Campaign to Ratify the Children's Rights Convention, to help the United States to observe the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Ratification by the US Senate will:

- ✓ ***Make the CRC truly universal;***
- ✓ ***Give us a way to see how American children compare with others;***
- ✓ ***Help us to focus our energies and resources where our children need them most;***
- ✓ ***Give the US Government a voice in improving children's rights in other countries where needed;***
- ✓ ***Restore US leadership in human rights and the condition of children everywhere.***

193 governments can't be wrong!

For over 21 years the CRC has helped children all over the world through a process of reviews by the UN Committee on Children's Rights. Once every 5 years the Committee reviews every participating government's implementation of the CRC, then issues recommendations to the government to improve its children's rights. The Committee has no power to force any government action or to send "nannies in blue berets" to take children from their parents, as some have claimed. It can only shine the light of public attention on children's conditions everywhere.

The Committee's "peer review" reports have helped governments to improve the lives of their children and their families. They also help other governments to understand local conditions elsewhere, and to direct aid to where it will be most effective.

In the CRC's 21 years no government has renounced it. While many governments cannot or do not meet the CRC's standards, all are committed to work toward full implementation, and all support its universal standards.



The Ratification Process

Ratification of human rights treaties by the United States historically has been a very slow process. Madeleine Albright, then Secretary of State, signed the CRC in 1995, but the Senate has not yet ratified it.

The next step in the CRC's process is for the President to send to the Senate his recommendation for ratification, along with proposed understandings, declarations, and reservations. All recent human rights treaties have included a reservation that protects US sovereignty by releasing the Government from any duty to comply with any provision of the treaty that has not yet been implemented by applicable Federal, State, and local laws. The Obama Administration favors ratification.

Then the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reviews the CRC, holds hearings, and recommends action for the Senate. Under the Constitution, the Senate must have 67 "yes" votes to ratify any treaty.

What are we doing?

For many years the Campaign has been mobilizing support for the CRC, visiting Congressional and Administration offices, holding conferences and national meetings, facilitating grassroots campaigns, educating the public, and moving the ratification process toward full United States participation in the CRC. People with a concern for children all over the country, and over 200 major and smaller national organizations, have come out publicly in support of ratification. Resolutions of support for ratification have been adopted by Hawaii and a number of local jurisdictions. We need your help in the Campaign's efforts to work with some of these organizations and individuals to get President Obama to forward the CRC to the Senate for its consideration, to work toward ratification in the Senate, and to work toward full implementation of the CRC's provisions at all levels of government in the USA.

In 2011 the Campaign is initiating partnerships with major national organizations and foundations to implement provisions of the CRC directly in States and local jurisdictions, even before ratification, to demonstrate how easy and helpful it is to live with CRC standards.