



# District 5 – Foundation and Legislative Awareness & Advocacy

Volume No. 1 – Issue 4 – Summer Edition 2007

Joanne “Van” VanSant, District Foundation Ambassador, Zonta Club of Columbus

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## **ZI FOUNDATION NEEDS CLUBS AND INDIVIDUAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

How fortunate we are to belong to an International Organization where our focus is on improving the status of women and girls worldwide!

The programs and projects that need our financial support are lagging behind in contributions; and we, in District 5, have not contributed, as we should. I was both surprised and disappointed to learn that more than half of our Clubs have not sent any Club contributions during the first half of the biennium. Please, *I urge you*, to send your contributions *as soon as possible*.

As we begin the second half of this biennium, we Zontians have only met 38% of the goal that was established at the last convention. Remind Clubs and individuals to send only Foundation contributions to the Foundation account. Remit all non-electronic contribution payments to:

Zonta International Foundation  
ATTN: Development  
4837 Paysphere Circle  
Chicago, IL 60674 USA

Note on both the check and envelope that it is for Development. Remind your members that individual contributions may be made on-line by using Visa or MasterCard.

Many of you have contributed to the challenge grant and I appreciate that every much. As you may recall, I am matching your individual gifts to the Rose Fund one for two. I agreed to raise my maximum to \$3,000.00. To date, you as individuals have contributed slightly over \$4,000.00. I am convinced we'll make it!

The International Foundation Board met in mid-June and elected our new officers: Betty Jane Bourdon will serve as President; Kirsten Theisen as Vice President; and Carol Borecky as Treasurer. District 5's contact on the Foundation Board is Carol.

Keep checking the ZI web site for additional information and reports. You will find that new projects have been

approved for the ZISVAW Fund and other important information enabling you to stay up to date.

Keep Giving!! All the Best,

***Van, District Foundation Ambassador***

## **CEDAW: U.S. ONLY INDUSTRIALIZED NATION NOT TO RATIFY TREATY**

As of November 2006, 185 countries have **ratified** the Convention on the **E**limination of all forms of **D**iscrimination **A**gainst **W**omen (**CEDAW**) – over 90% of the members of the United Nations. The United States has **signed** this Convention, but the Senate has yet to **ratify**. Other countries that have yet to ratify CEDAW besides the U.S. are Iran, Sudan and Somalia. Another point to ponder: The U.S. is the only industrialized nation **not** to ratify CEDAW.

**What is CEDAW?** Known as the Women's Treaty, CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations in 1979. Also referred to as an international bill of rights for women, CEDAW is the only international treaty that would comprehensively address basic rights and aim to end all forms of discrimination against women. CEDAW would also achieve equality between women and men in all fields of civil, cultural life, economics, education, employment, family relations, health care, law, marriage, politics and social life – just to name a few.

**What is CEDAW's history with U.S.?** In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed the treaty. By signing it, President Carter indicated the U.S. intent to ratify CEDAW and informally agreed to abide by the provisions of CEDAW until Congress ratified it. For the past 27 years, CEDAW has failed to come before the full Senate due mostly to political squabbling. In July 2002, Senator Joseph R. Biden (D-DE) chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Senator Biden made a recommendation the Committee ratify CEDAW; however, the Senate adjourned in 2002 without a vote. In 2004, Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) chaired the same committee

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and CEDAW was not addressed. In 2006, Senator Biden was appointed to chair the committee. As of February 2007, CEDAW is not on the agenda of the Senate.

**What needs to happen?** The Senate Foreign Relations Committee must vote to bring CEDAW before the full Senate for a ratification vote. Two-thirds of the Senate must vote in favor of ratifying CEDAW. Once CEDAW is ratified, the U.S. – along with the 185 other countries – is bound to put the provisions of the treaty into practice. No action is required of the U.S. House of Representatives.

**Why does CEDAW matter?** As a leader of human rights, the U.S. must ratify CEDAW to send a message that the U.S. values women's human rights highly. Ratifying CEDAW will enable the U.S. to nominate experts to a committee that monitors periodic reports of state parties that have already ratified CEDAW. By participating on this committee, the U.S. would have another chance to expand women's rights in countries around the world. Even though the U.S. continues to advocate for women's rights around the globe, ratifying CEDAW will send a clear message the U.S. stands together with 185 other countries that the protection of women's rights is a high priority not only abroad, but also within the U.S.

**What do we need to do?** Once Zontians return from summer break – along with Congress, it is well timed to write our Ohio Senators asking them to support ratification by the U.S. Senate of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. We are fortunate to have Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Voinovich's contact information is:

Senator George Voinovich  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510  
202/224-3353

Our other Ohio Senator is Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH). His contact information is:

Senator Sherrod Brown  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building – Court Yard 5  
Washington DC 20510  
202/224-2315

A sample letter provided by ZI is attached for your convenience. Please write and/or call Senator Voinovich and Senator Brown to encourage them to support bringing CEDAW to a vote within the full Senate as quickly as possible! CEDAW needs to be ratified by the U.S. now!

### **ZI's SECOND POSITION PAPER: We need your input**

At its last meeting, the ZI Board approved the second position paper topic to be produced. Entitled: *Improve the access of women and girls to math, science and technology education*, the ZI Legislative Awareness & Advocacy Subcommittee is in the process of researching and collecting information on this topic.

ZI is requesting anyone who may be able to contribute pertinent information on this topic, please contact Elba Pereyra de Gomensoro, ZI LAA Subcommittee Coordinator @ pereyraelba@hotmail.com.

Zontians who are teachers in these fields or anyone who may have family and/or friends in the field of education specializing in these fields that could help us with this project, please refer them to Elba.

Again, if you would have any insight on experts on this topic who may be able to assist with preparing the position paper, it is imperative you contact Elba. Your assistance with this project would be – and is – **GREATLY** appreciated by all of us!

**UN AND RELATED AGENCIES  
BRING EMPHASIS ON ISSUES  
AFFECTING WOMEN**

Ban Ki Moon, secretary general of the United Nations as of January 2007 and previously South Korea's foreign minister, has made it clear he is determined to increase the number of women in leadership roles within his administration. Among the high-ranking women at the UN and its affiliated agencies:

- o Asha-Rose Migiro (Tanzania) – the second highest-ranking UN official as Ban's deputy
- o Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa (Bahrain) – president of the UN General Assembly
- o Alicia Barcena (Mexico) – undersecretary general for management
- o Michele Montas (Haiti) – UN spokeswoman
- o Margaret Chan (China) – World Health Organization (WHO) director general
- o Ann Veneman (U.S.) – UNICEF executive director

***Amy F. Grubbe, Lt. Governor***

***SAMPLE LETTER TO SENATORS PROVIDED BY ZJ***

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

As your constituents, we are writing to ask your support for the prompt ratification by the United States Senate of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

This Convention is an international bill of rights for women. It addresses women's rights to equality in politics, health care, education, economics, employment, law, property, family relations and marriage – to name a few. It has been used worldwide to end abuses and discrimination against women since it came into force in 1979.

CEDAW has been languishing in the U.S. Senate since President Jimmy Carter signed the treaty and sent it to the Senate in 1980. In fact, there had not even been a hearing on the treaty for ten (10) years.

Ratifying CEDAW now would send an important message at a critical time for world opinion that the protection of women's human rights here and abroad is very much a priority of the United States. To date, 185 countries have ratified this treaty. Aside from the United States, Iran, Sudan and Somalia are among those who have **not** ratified CEDAW. As a final point, the U.S. is the **only** industrialized nation not to ratify CEDAW.

Legal experts generally agree that U.S. laws are already basically in compliance with the contents of the CEDAW Convention. Ratifying this treaty signifies that the U.S. stands strong – with another 185 countries – against discrimination and abuse of women not only internationally, but also domestically.

Finally, ratification of CEDAW would enable the United States to nominate experts to the CEDAW Committee that monitors periodic reports of state parties that have ratified the treaty. Participating on