


North Country Legislative Representatives

Elizabeth O’C Little (45th Senatorial District) Albany Office: Room 903, Legislative Office Bldg, Albany, NY 12247; 455-2811; Fax 426-6873. Plattsburgh Office: Government Center, Suite 100, 137 Margaret St., Plattsburgh, NY 12901; 561-2430 email: little@senate.state.ny.us
Janet Duprey (114th Assembly District) Albany Office: LOB 937, Albany, NY 12248; 455-5943. District Office: 202 U.S. Oval, Plattsburgh, NY 12901; 562-1986 email: dupreyj@assembly.state.ny.us
Teresa Sayward (113th Assembly District) Phone 455-5565; Fax 455-5710 email: saywart@assembly.state.ny.us

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Sen. Kirsten E. Gillibrand
531 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Tel: 202-224-4451 Fax: 202-228-0282
Web: http://gillibrand.senate.gov
Sen. Charles Schumer
313 Hart Office Bldg.,
Washington, DC 20510
Tel: 202-224-6542 Fax: 202-228-3027
Email: http://schumer.senate.gov/new_website/contact.cfm
Web: http://schumer.senate.gov

Governor David A. Paterson
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
518-474-8390 http://161.11.121.121.govemail
Rep. Bill Owens (23rd Congressional District)
Room 2366, Rayburn House Building,
Washington, DC 20515-3223 (Plattsburgh 563-1406)
Tel: 202-225-4611 Fax: 202-226-0621
Web: http://owens.house.gov

 **Does the Current State of Politics Get You Angry?**
Don’t Just Explode!
Join the League of Women Voters
and Do Something About It!!
Join an organization that makes an impact in the community, the state and the nation.
Nonpartisan: We do not support candidates, elected officials or political parties.

Membership Information: call Myra Decker 643-2742 or send:
Name _____
Address _____

Telephone No. (home) _____ (work) _____ Email: _____
Membership Dues: _____ \$50.00 Individual
(Check desired level) _____ \$70.00 Family
Make **check** out to: **Plattsburgh Area League of Women Voters**
Mail to: Myra Decker, 7 Woodland Hills, Morrisonville, NY 12962

THE INFORMER



League of Women Voters
of the Plattsburgh Area

January 2011 No. 5

7 Woodland Hills
Morrisonville, New York 12962

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Reminder: Deadline for Dues - December 31st.

Visit Plattsburgh LWV Web Site at www.plattsburgh.ny.lwvnet.org



Greetings from Florida

Hello everyone,

We've had our "cold" fronts which feels more like "spring" in Plattsburgh. Very refreshing with plenty of sun.

The League has quieted down with the holidays but plans have been made for our "Greet and Meet" with local governmental officials in January. It is a social like event in which League members can talk and ask questions of individual officials.

The December League meeting was on education. The speaker was an educator and Dean of the College of Education at Florida Gulf Coast University. He began by saying that we have been band-aiding our way to educational excellence. We address the symptoms, not the cause of inadequacies.

Question we have to ask is how will we educate 9.2 billion people to prepare them for the future. Tony Wagner (co-director of the Change in Leadership Group at the Harvard School of Education) identified what he refers to as '7 survival skills' that are the critical elements for student. Those are-

- Critical thinking/Problem solving
- Collaboration (and leading with influence)
- Adaptability and Agility
- Initiative and Entrepreneurship
- Effective Communication (both oral and written)
- Gathering and Analyzing Information
- Curiosity and Imagination

He also referred to Howard Gardner (Harvard

Univ. Professor) on his work with intelligence and education. Students have to be engaged which we do not do. We expect students to regurgitate what has been taught. The challenges are enormous. Competency should include basic skills, thinking skills, personal responsibility (how do you use resources and work with teams, teach others.

We have to answer the question "What is the purpose of education?" We try to teach FCAT knowledge, but why isn't social studies included?

The nation who out educates will control the world. Two-thirds of peoples (predominantly girls) are not in school. Education is a better way to economic recovery.

High number of high school graduates are not prepared for college. Teachers nurture children in elementary school and young children rate well in the world. Jr. high and high school education results rates less well. Students should be accommodated with technology (cell phones, ipads, etc.)

On a more positive note, he said that there are successful schools. Student learning should be the focus, not teacher focused. Use data to evaluate progress. Focus on success for all students. Teachers should learn from others and share results.

Have a wonderful New Year. Keep warm and don't get buried in the snow.

Stasia

Answers to Women's History Quiz

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1.c | 4.c |
| 2.b | 5.c |
| 3.b | 6.a |

Hard Copy of Informer

To all members and the public: If you wish to receive the League Newsletter, "The Informer" by mail, please submit \$5.00 to cover cost of postage and printing for 10 issues. Make check payable to **League of Women Voters, Plattsburgh Area** and send it to **Myra Decker, 7 Woodland Hill, Morrisonville, NY 12962.**

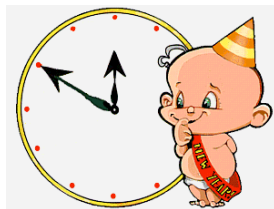
LWV Plattsburgh Area Diversity Statement

"The League of Women Voters of the Plattsburgh Area is committed to diversity and pluralism. There shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, economic status or political affiliation."

The League of Women Voters of New York State Convention will be held May 20-22, 2011 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, NY.

The state board invites members to make suggestions for workshops at the convention. Learn how to submit your ideas at the state web site: <http://www.lwvny.org>.

Happy New Year



Steps to access the Informer:

Log on to www.plattsburgh.ny.lwvnet.org. Click on "The Informer" either on the side bar or main part of the page. Click on <http://www.lwvny-bulletins.org/Capital%20Region/Plattsburgh.htm> The next page enables you to click on the latest or past editions of the newsletter. It will ask to either open it up or save it to a disk. You can then print it if you desire. You will get a larger print if you use legal size paper.

LWVNYS Legislative Agenda, 2011

FIX ALBANY NOW – Steps To A New and Better State Government

- **Redistricting** – Create an independent redistricting commission to draft the New York State Legislative and Congressional political boundaries for the 2012 elections.
- **Campaign Finance Reform**– Support lower contribution limits and increased disclosure. In particular support stronger and effective campaign finance enforcement with increased civil and criminal penalties for violations.
- **Ethics Reform**– Put in place a new independent ethics over-sight agency and rougher enforcement. Make the legislature more open and accountable through continued rules reform.
- **Election Reform**–Improve election processes to extend, encourage and protect voting, including Election Day registration, better ballot design, improved polling place management/poll worker training, and measures to ensure the integrity of all ballots.

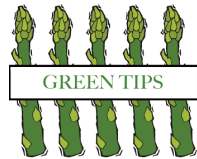
Remember: Local Leagues can still take action in other areas on which LWVNYS has positions. (Health Care, the Judiciary, Natural Resources, State Finances and Social Policy including Women's Issues.

continued from p. 8 “Women in History”

book, *The Roosevelt I Knew*, lectured widely, and accepted a professorship in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University.

Bibliography: George Martin, *Madam Secretary: Frances Perkins* (1976); Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (1981). *Author:* Alice Kessler-Harris

Taken from: <http://www.answers.com/topic/frances-perkins> [Houghton Mifflin Companion to US History:](#)



White Vinegar— The Housekeeper’s Helper!

Deodorize Your Sink: Pour a cup of baking soda followed by one cup of hot vinegar down your kitchen drain. Let sit for five minutes, then rinse with hot water.

Clean Counter Tops: Wipe down with rag dipped in vinegar.

Clean Refrigerator: Wipe shelves and walls with a mixture of half vinegar/half water.

Disinfect Wood Cutting Board: Wash with vinegar.

Remove deposits from coffee maker: Run a cycle with one cup of vinegar; then run water through twice to remove vinegar odor.

Submitted by **Glorian Berk**
Source: www.vinegartips.com

From: The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons Volume XXXIV, No. 1

Women’s History Quiz?

- Who founded Hull House in Chicago and also won the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize?
 - Sophonisba Breckinridge
 - Louise de Koven Bowen
 - Jane Addams
- Who joined Elizabeth Cady Stanton to found the National Woman Suffrage Association?
 - Lucretia Mott
 - Susan B. Anthony
 - Amelia Bloomer
- Which suffragist reformed women’s clothing by wearing loose-fitting pantaloons, suggesting they were more rational and comfortable?
 - Matilda Joslyn Gage
 - Amelia Bloomer
 - Lucretia Mott
- Who was the tireless, witty Kentucky suffragist who wrote to Gov. James McCreary, “Kentucky women are not idiots even though they are closely related to Kentucky men”?
 - Josephine Henry
 - Laura Clay
 - Madeline McDowell Breckinridge
- Who was the skillful political strategist who developed the “winning plan” for the final push to victory and later founded the League of Women Voters after the 19th Amendment was ratified?
 - Mary Ann McClintock
 - Alice Stone Blackwell
 - Carrie Chapman Catt
- Who was a daughter of slaves who took up suffrage and was befriended by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton?
 - Sojourner Truth
 - Harriet Tubman
 - Ida B. Wells-Barnett

9 c. Ida B. Wells-Barnett (answers on p. 10)

The Informer

League of Women Voters
of the Plattsburgh Area



January 2011

President
Myra Decker 643-2742
mystdek7@northnet.org

Stasia Arcarese 561-1745
“Informer” Editor
larry.arcarese@verizon.net

League of Women Voters
First Friday Forum

JANUARY 8, 2011

9:30 am

PHS Auditorium

“Meet the Legislators”

The League of Women Voters announces a first time educational event for area high school students featuring state legislators, Senator Betty Little, Assemblywoman Janet Duprey, and Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward.

Legislators Little, Duprey and Sayward have agreed to assist in educating high school students from Clinton and Essex Counties about the makeup and functioning of our New York State Senate and Assembly.

Two students from each school have been chosen as honored delegates to this Meet Your Legislators event but all students are encouraged to attend.

Topics to be addressed by legislators regarding

respective roles in the senate and in the assembly include steps in becoming a legislator, job description, background, experience, committees, introduction of a bill, party loyalty, advantages and disadvantages of being a legislator, issues and/or people who may have impacted career path. Question and answer periods will follow after each legislators presentation. A power point presentation on *Students Inside Albany* prepared by the League of Women Voters of New York State will also be a part of the program.

At the end of the Meet Your Legislators event one student and two alternates will be chosen by lottery to represent the North Country area at the *Students Inside Albany* event in April. The event allows students to shadow a legislator from his or her district and to see New York State government in action.



2011 Calendar

January 8, 2011	Meet Your Legislators
February 4, 2011	FFF - 12 noon
February 26, 2011	Redistricting Seminar
March 4, 2011	FFF - 12 noon
April 1, 2011	FFF - 12 noon

December FFF Report

by Betsy Metz

At the December 3rd FFF, **Jim and Kathleen Garrant** described the Guardians of the Ribbon



program. The non-profit, non-political firefighters' organization is dedicated to supporting breast cancer victims and cancer research. Founded by Dave Graybill in Phoenix, Arizona, there are now 15 chapters covering 3,000 cities in the U.S and one newly formed in Canada. The Plattsburgh chapter is currently the only one in New England. The next closest chapter is in New Jersey.

Jim and Kathleen's life experiences led him to create the local chapter. Jim is the assistant fire chief at the West Chazy fire department. Kathleen is a breast cancer survivor.

Guardians of the Ribbon is funded by donations, not corporate sponsorships. Monies provide financial assistance:

- to patients without insurance
- for supplemental payments for treatments not covered by insurance
- cancer research

The firefighters help bring communities together to meet the needs of cancer patients. During vacation time firefighters travel to help firefighters in other areas. Visiting firefighters assist in fund-raising and providing services for breast cancer patients.

Pink T shirts and pink fire trucks readily identify the Guardians of the Ribbon. The West Chazy pink fire truck is made possible through the donations of paint from DuPont and labor by Parker Chevrolet. Howard at Michael's is a major supporter.

Websites: local

www.guardiansoftheribbonny.webs.org <<http://www.guardiansoftheribbonny.webs.org>>

national www.pinkfiretrucks.org <<http://www.pinkfiretrucks.org>>

As a cancer survivor Kathleen believes that "every day is new".



Sally Sears-Mack, Betty Ann King, Sara Hurwitz

Attention All League Members!!

Encourage League members and your friends to attend the Meet the Legislators Event on January 8th at 9:30 AM in the Plattsburgh High School Auditorium. The League is so grateful for this wonderful opportunity made possible by Senator Betty Little, Assemblywoman Janet Duprey and Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward.

Women in History

Perkins, Frances (1880-1965), social reformer and U.S. secretary of labor. Perkins grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts, where her father ran a stationery business. She was raised in comfortable, middle-class, Republican circumstances. Perkins attended Worcester Classical High School, a largely male institution, and then went to Mount Holyoke College, graduating as president of the class of 1902. She taught physics and biology for several years, moving to Lake Forest, Illinois, in 1904. There she became involved in the social settlement movement, which kindled the interest in social reform that was to govern her life.



In 1907, Perkins moved to Philadelphia and then to New York City where she worked for social reform groups and simultaneously earned a master's degree in sociology and economics from Columbia University. In 1910 she became secretary of the New York Consumers' League where she investigated labor conditions and successfully lobbied the state legislature for a law to restrict the hours of women workers to fifty-four hours a week. Her association with Al Smith during those years led eventually to her appointment in 1918 as the first woman to serve on the New York State Industrial Commission. She became chair of the commission in 1926 and industrial commissioner of the state of New York in 1928. She was reappointed to that office by Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1929 and retained it until her appointment by him as secretary of labor in 1933.

When she married Paul Caldwell Wilson in 1913, Perkins successfully fought to retain her own

name. Until her husband lost much of his inheritance in 1918, Perkins was involved with volunteer work. Thereafter, she worked to support her husband and child, a task that was to become increasingly important as Wilson began exhibiting the mental irrationality that was to keep him institutionalized for much of his later years.

The first female cabinet member in U.S. history and one of only two Roosevelt cabinet appointees to serve throughout his tenure, Perkins brought to the job an unwavering devotion to social reform. She demanded, and got from Roosevelt, a commitment to support federal initiatives in the areas of unemployment relief and public works, insurance to guard workers from the hazards of old age and unemployment, and efforts to regulate child labor as well as wages and hours for adults. These became the cornerstones of the New Deal's policies for depression relief and reform. Carefully conceived under Perkins's watchful eyes and shepherded by her through the intricacies of the political process, the Social Security Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act remain monuments to her ability to make progress through incremental steps and to her mastery of the art of compromise.

Although Roosevelt leaned heavily on her, Perkins's strong attachment to social justice rendered her an unpopular figure in Congress and the press. She alienated business but won over the leaders of organized labor by resisting pressure from industrialists to intervene in strikes. She refused to succumb to threats of impeachment when right-wing congressional leaders urged her to deport Harry Bridges, leader of the Longshoremen's Union and a suspected communist, without appropriate legal action.

Perkins resigned her position after Roosevelt's death in 1945. Thereafter, she wrote a best-selling



Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools Petition

The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, www.civicismionofschools.org, a coalition of 40 organizations committed to improving the quality and quantity of civic learning in American schools, is sponsoring a petition to remind all policymakers of the essential and historic role schools play in providing the knowledge, skills and disposition for informed and engaged citizenship. The Campaign is asking all Americans nationwide to sign [this petition](#) reminding policymakers of the three essential C-s of education, preparation for College, Career and Citizenship. The petition will be presented to local, state and federal education policymakers in 2011. The League is a part of the Campaign and serves on its Steering Committee.

Elisabeth's Blog Dec 14 2010

Nearly one year ago, on Christmas Eve, health care reform overcame Senate roadblocks and headed toward final enactment by the Congress, with the President's signature coming in March.

This week, one of the many legal challenges to this new law was successful, with a federal district court judge in Virginia ruling that the individual mandate is unconstitutional. But, importantly, he didn't block implementation of the other provisions of the Affordable Care Act. And other attempts to block the law have failed thus far. (Here's a listing of the many [legal challenges](#).)

The important legal case, however, will be the one that reaches the U.S. Supreme Court. Many observers see Justice Kennedy as the swing vote on an evenly divided court who will ultimately say yea or nay to the new law. To overturn the law, decades of constitutional interpretation would have to be thrown out the window. By every

established measure the Affordable Care Act is constitutional. This article by HHS Secretary Sebelius and Attorney General Holder (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/13/AR2010121303816.html>) explains in clear terms why the individual mandate in the new legislation is so important – and why it's constitutional. One of the reasons the article is worth looking at is that there will be attempts in the next Congress to overturn the law. The League and others who believe that health care is a basic necessity will need to be on our toes for the upcoming fights, not only in the courts, but in Congress and in the states. As you know, key elements of the legislation depend on state implementation.

For those of us who support Medicare for All, playing defense on health care isn't our first choice. But it's clear after the last election that we're going to need to protect the new Affordable Care Act in many forums before our nation will be ready to take the next step. The League's work will be needed now more than ever.

Health Insurance Reform Implementation for 2011 Examples

Bringing Down the Cost of Health Care Coverage.

Health insurers, including grandfathered plans, must annually report on the share of premium dollars spent on medical care as opposed to profits or administration and provide consumer rebates where less than 80 to 85 percent of dollars are used for benefits.

Improving Preventive Health Coverage. Provides a free, annual wellness visit and personalized prevention plan services for Medicare beneficiaries and requires new plans to cover preventive services with little cost sharing.

Redistricting Bills

Why We Should Care About Redistricting Reform

During the last election, we heard most candidates for state office repeat that “the New York State legislature is the most dysfunctional in the nation.” Why has this dubious honor been bestowed on New York? Like many reputations, this one was well-earned. A poll conducted last summer showed that 83 percent of those questioned agreed with the description of the state government as “dysfunctional,” up from 76 percent in December of 2009 and 71 percent in April 2009. That poll further showed that 76 percent of voters disapproved of the Legislature, 51 percent of respondents said that their state senator should be voted out of office in November, while only 36 percent said their senator deserved re-election. The poll said half of respondents also want to oust their Assembly member, compared with 34 percent who favor re-election.

So what happened at the election?

Well, despite the fact that the disapproval rating of the legislature was off the charts, and the national fervor against incumbents was at a fever pitch, most incumbents in the New York State legislature were re-elected. This repeats the pattern of past years, in which incumbent state legislative candidates were re-elected at a staggering rate. According to NYPIRG, over the past 22 years, only 30 incumbents have been beaten in the general elections. How does this happen? One of the reasons is the way in which our state draws the lines determining the electoral districts. (from *The Voter*, Newsletter of the LWV of Hamptons)

Problems with current process:

New York State's decennial reapportionment and redistricting process has been a source of controversy. The current system is designed to

protect incumbents, maintain – to the greatest extent possible – party control over the two legislative chambers and undermines the key principle of American democracy: “one person, one vote.” While not illegal, New York has and State legislative district lines that can be dramatically different in size. A recent analysis of district populations finds that State Assembly districts ranged from 121,111 people to 133,038 people, Senate districts ranging from 290,925 people to 320,851 people. The chart below illustrates the number of State Assembly and Senate districts that deviate from the ideal district size by percentages.

Population range

from ideal	Assembly	Senate
Zero to 1 percent	18	11
1 to 2 percent	33	28
2 to 3 percent	29	4
3 to 5 percent	70	19

Solution: “Independent” Redistricting Commissions

The LWV and other groups support legislation creating an independent commission to propose legislative district lines while following state constitutional and federal legal requirements.

Memo in Support of S1614B <http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/legAction/Memo_supportS1614B_060410.pdf>

This bill eliminates the existing reapportionment and redistricting commission and replaces it with an independent commission. The new commission's members would be appointed by the legislative leaders from a pool of candidates selected by a nominations committee. The bill also sets standards for the drawing of the new district lines.

continued from p. 4 “Redistricting”

Section Analysis of S1614B <http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/legAction/SectionAnaly_S1614B_060410.pdf>

2011 Timetable for Redistricting Plan Under S1614B and A5279B <<http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/legAction/2011TimetableRedistrictingPlan0510.pdf>>

Memo in Opposition to S7881A and S7882A <http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/legAction/Redistricting_S7881A%20S7882A_0610.pdf>

These bills eliminate the existing reapportionment and redistricting commission and replace it with a commission still controlled by the legislature, either through their own service or directly chosen appointments.



Speaker-elect Boehner Urged to Keep Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE)

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters today called on Speaker-elect John Boehner to retain the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) in the upcoming 112th Congress and to maintain the OCE’s duties, powers and structure.

“The retention of the OCE -- or its demise -- will signal the direction the new leadership will be taking the House of Representatives on ethics issues,” according to Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the League.

“We are deeply concerned that many in Congress, apparently wishing to return to a time when there was no meaningful ethics enforcement in the House of Representatives, have called for steps that would substantially weaken the OCE,” she said.

“You can’t fire the cop and then say you’re against crime,” according to MacNamara.

In the 2010 elections, “the American people did not vote for less ethics and more corruption,” MacNamara said. “The retention of a strong and effective Office of Congressional Ethics is essential to regaining the public’s trust.”

The League congratulated Representative Boehner, the incoming Speaker, as well Representative Pelosi, the current Speaker, for the quality of their appointments to the governing board of the OCE. Each appointed half of the independent board’s current members. “Under their leadership, the OCE has functioned effectively, but fairly, in investigating possible ethics violations and reporting its findings to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or the public, as appropriate,” MacNamara said.

The League urged that the OCE not be weakened in any way. The group said that the OCE must retain its independent, bipartisan leadership structure, the ability to issue public reports, begin investigations on its own initiative, and hire and supervise an independent staff. The League also called for strengthening the OCE by ensuring that it has access to subpoena power.

League Supports the CEDAW Treaty

On November 19, the League of Women Voters joined with over 100 coalition partners in support of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Treaty in a [statement to the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law](#).

CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human

continued from p. 5 “CEDAW”

rights and equality for women around the world. Recognizing that women’s rights are human rights, it seeks to end sex trafficking and violence against women, prohibit forced marriage and child marriage, expand girls’ access to education, ensure women’s right to vote, help families by fighting maternal mortality, and end workplace discrimination against women. By providing a practical blueprint for achieving progress for women and girls, it has helped millions of women around the world.

In countries that have ratified CEDAW, women and their advocates have partnered with their governments to improve the status of women and girls. As a result, laws and policies have changed to create greater opportunity and security for women and their families. For example, Mexico responded to an epidemic of violence against women by passing the Mexican General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free from Violence in 2007, which draws on CEDAW and today has been adopted by all of Mexico’s 32 states. In 2009 the High Court of Bangladesh, relying in part on CEDAW, for the first time issued guidelines to prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace. Women in Kuwait won the right to vote for the first time in 2005 immediately after the CEDAW reporting process brought international attention to Kuwaiti women’s disenfranchisement. And in 2009, the Philippines passed a comprehensive women’s rights law that relied heavily upon CEDAW provisions. These are only a few examples of the way that CEDAW has led ratifying nations to take steps to improve the lives of women.

The United States is one of only seven countries in the world that has not ratified CEDAW. It is in unlikely company. The others are Iran, Sudan,

Somalia, and three small Pacific Island nations. Ratification of CEDAW would not only continue the United States’ proud bipartisan tradition of promoting and protecting human rights, it is in our own best interests. Empowerment of women leads to more prosperous, stable, peaceful societies the world over. By ratifying CEDAW, the United States would strengthen its global leadership in standing up for the rights of women and girls, promote poverty reduction and economic development, and enhance political stability internationally. CEDAW stands for and advances values that the American public strongly supports, including equality, fairness, and access to education for all. Ratifying CEDAW would be an important affirmation of these values and an impetus for the United States to recommit itself to continuing to improve the status of women and girls not only abroad, but also at home. CEDAW serves as a catalyst for countries to increase awareness of gender disparities, engage in a serious and sustained analysis of where more efforts are needed, and consider new strategies for moving forward. In this way, it would provide an additional tool for the United States to address domestic violence, combat the increasing problem of human trafficking, improve educational opportunities for women (particularly in critical fields such as math and science), expand employment opportunities, achieve equal pay, and promote women’s health.

The United States has long been a world leader in championing human rights and women’s rights. Ratification of CEDAW would enhance and forward this leadership, to the benefit of women and girls around the world. It is our profound hope that this hearing is an important step toward a renewed commitment to ratification of CEDAW by the United States.

Sincerely,