



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Kamala Harris
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

On behalf of the US Women's Caucus at the United Nations, we wish to congratulate you on your recent nomination for Vice President. Your nomination to the post represents a monumental step for all women but particularly for women of color in breaking the glass ceiling into the very top level of legislative power in the United States. You have made a well-deserved place in the history books.

Let us introduce our organization. The US Women's Caucus at the UN represents many national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) recognized by the UN Council of Economic and Social Affairs (ECOSOC). Our member organizations work to secure the rights and improve the general welfare of women and girls in the United States and around the world.

The US Women's Caucus at the UN actively supports the UN 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action whose 25th anniversary is being celebrated this year. We advocate for the US Senate to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), extend the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and to renew the Violence against Women Act (VAWA). The attached policy statement for the 2020 UN Commission on the Status of Women gives more information on our Caucus positions.

Unfortunately, representing American NGOs on women's issues at an international organization like the UN has become more difficult as the current administration has not chosen to champion women's issues. On the contrary, it has tried to diminish them. The US has lost any claim of leadership that it once had on this issue at home, abroad, and at the UN itself.

We hope that if you and Joe Biden are elected in the fall, you will remedy this situation and you will put women's equality issues as top priority both at home and as part of US foreign policy. This is now particularly important in the face of the current COVID crisis where women have borne the brunt with higher infection rates, loss of jobs and health care coverage, low wages, and shouldering both child and eldercare issues at home.

The US needs to regain its leadership standing with the rest of the world on women's rights as well as other issues such as human rights and climate change. We hope that the new administration will review its UN policies, reenergize the US Mission to the United Nations by once again appointing top notch professionals, and commit to remit all UN dues which have been stalled under the current administration, hobbling the urgent work of the UN.

We wish you luck on your campaign going forward, and look forward to working with you on women's issues at the UN.

With very best wishes,

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