



## **CITIES FOR CEDAW CAMPAIGN, CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT**

October 15, 2015, San Francisco, California, USA

Marilyn Fowler, President/CEO

Women's Intercultural Network (WIN)

[citiesforcedaw@WINaction.org](mailto:citiesforcedaw@WINaction.org)

San Francisco, California, USA

### **Population:** (July 2014)

San Francisco City/County: 805,235 (with 286,000 born outside of the US)

California: 38,802,500

US: 321,729,000 (with 81% in cities and suburbs)

### **History of the US Cities for CEDAW Campaign:**

The Cities for CEDAW Campaign was launched at the UN CSW 58 Forum as “Cities for Sustainable Development and Women’s Human Rights Beijing+20” on March 12, 2014. The UN CEDAW forum alerted ‘ground troops’ and government officials to a call for action to engage US mayors in a movement pushing CEDAW ordinances at local municipal levels. See Achievements #2 for a summary of campaign development and tools. The longer story is on the website at [CitiesforCedaw.org](http://CitiesforCedaw.org) or weblog at <https://citiesforcedaw.wordpress.com/welcome-to-the-cities-for-cedaw-weblog/>

**National Action:** The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights convenes a CEDAW Task Force of almost 200 national organizations that continues to engage in educating policy makers and the public on the benefits of U.S. ratification of CEDAW. Although President Obama supports ratification of CEDAW, the Treaty has not moved beyond hearings in the Senate Judiciary and Foreign Relations Committees during his Administration.

In 2010, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, chaired by Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), held a hearing on CEDAW. In 2011, two Senate Foreign Relations subcommittees, chaired by Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Robert Casey (D-PA), held a joint hearing on Women and the Arab Spring, which highlighted how CEDAW has been used in the Middle East and North Africa to advance equality for women and girls. More recently, in June 2014, a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee chaired by Senator Boxer held a hearing on Combating Violence and Discrimination Against Women: A Global Call to Action, which cited the importance of CEDAW for

women around the world, including in the United States. At each of these hearings, the State Department testified about the importance of CEDAW and the need for US ratification.

However, CEDAW has never been brought to the Senate floor for a vote. To ratify the Treaty, CEDAW needs to be voted on by the full Senate, where it requires a two-thirds majority of support, or 67 votes. The House of Representatives has no formal role. We do not anticipate any further action on CEDAW before 2017.

### **1. Lead Organization for the US Civil Society arm of the Campaign**

The Women's Intercultural Network (WIN), an NGO consultative to the UN ECOSOC since 1998, is spearheading NGO and civil society organization development in support of municipal CEDAW ordinances. WIN's anchor state action network, California Women's Agenda (CAWA), is also a 'global to local' project and became a model policy mechanism for bringing the 'Beijing Platform for Action' (BPFA) to the Grassroots of California from the UN 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women, Beijing, since September, 1995. Parallel to the SF city/county CEDAW initiative and to implement the Human Rights critical concern of the BPFA, CAWA worked with counties for CEDAW resolutions. At one time there were 15 county CEDAW resolutions and 17 city CEDAW resolutions. WIN's mission is to assure that all women and girl's voices are heard in public forums for full participation in their governments and economies. Working with a US campaign to implement a global women's treaty was a natural for WIN. See the WIN global programs at "Calling the Circle" at WINaction.org website.

### **2. Achievements of the Civil Society Campaign:**

In preparation for the March 2014 UN CEDAW Forum launch, WIN began vetting 25 city mayors with a roster of potentials in late November 2013. We reached and invited 10 of those mayors to speak at the UN Forum but it was the holidays and by January most of them were snowed in - or they did not know what CEDAW is. Mayor Shelley Welch, University City, Missouri came and spoke eloquently about her city's progress. She is on the Cities for CEDAW YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/Cities4CEDAW> along with 4 other mayors - Mayor Ed Lee, San Francisco; Mayor Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles; Mayor Marilyn Strickland, Tacoma, WA and former San Francisco Mayor, Lt.Gov Gavin Newsom.

The response from the UN Forum was overwhelming and in July 2014 WIN agreed to serve as a Peer Leader (Co-Chair) with the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women for a US Cities for CEDAW Campaign to engage 100 US Mayors with Resolutions and CEDAW ordinances in their cities. WIN and SF DOSW agreed on roles and responsibilities and by January WIN had architecture in place that includes 10 major US women's and human rights membership organizations with affiliates throughout the US (See #3 Partners) a planning team, budget, brand, website, weblog, social media plan, a roadmap for organizing on the ground and on the Internet. We experimented with Webinars, Telepresence, Skype, other group conferencing on line, various data base, crowd funding and were in touch with several city civil society representatives building CEDAW coalitions. The Cities for CEDAW public sign up page at Mail Chimp has attracted 3,970 interested individuals. The citiesforcedaw.org website has an updated Resource page with a Tool Kit and plans for a city by city report page. The first year of

campaign movement brought us to 51 cities engaged at 4 levels and moving toward ordinances without mainstream media or large scale outreach except for Soon-Young Yoon's successful National Virtual Conference. Cities reporting to the CEDAW Committee are testimony to the energy and creative organizing on the ground throughout the US and territories. The Cities for CEDAW Campaign model of NGO/civil society and governmental/CSWs working in partnership at all levels for scaling up CEDAW implementation in the US is one that has worked for 20 years in San Francisco and California.

### **3. Strategic US partners are:**

- UN NGO CSW NY and UN CoNGO as founder and hub for the global campaign
- Lead Partner: Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCHR) WIN could not have progressed to this level without our lead civil society partner, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, whose CEDAW project struggled with US ratification for too many years. They joined with us in a newly focused campaign on municipal organizing and offered skills and creative collaboration vital to our success.
- UNA USA which reaches throughout the US UNA community, and
- Other US women's and Human Rights organizations with US affiliates including American Assn. of University Women, National Council of Women's Organizations, EPW-USA, US Women Connect, El Quinto Sol de America, National Assn. of Commissions on Women, Church Women United, Feminist Majority Foundation and other key US organizations.

- An expert Advisory Council to the Civil Society arm includes Krishanti Dharmaraj, Patti Chang, Ross Uchimura, Liz Abzug, Sonia Melara, Elmy Bermejo, Ileana Winterhalter, Mary Sue Barnett, Sonia Melara, Dr. Gail James, Julianne Cartwright Traylor, Karen Mulhauser, June Zeitlin, Elahe Amani, and Harriet Ishimoto.

### **4. Responsible for implementation at the municipal level:**

WIN and the LCCHR created a Landscape Roster for the 51 cities currently engaged at 4 levels. They have civil society chair/co-chairs or an interested person responsible for implementing the ordinances and monitoring the process. When a city's CEDAW coalition or task force makes contact with a mayor or COS we alert the SF DOSW, and vice versa.

A Landscape summary is available with:

- 4 cities implementing CEDAW ordinances
- 6 cities with pending CEDAW ordinances
- 16 working on resolutions and community support
- 25 initial inquiries that we have not had time or resources to follow up yet

### **5. Question for the CEDAW Committee:**

The San Francisco Bay Area 'speaks' 112 languages and we are behind Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago with more languages. We have a question from cities implementing or who are designing training for departments dealing with several cultures and languages. We have access to a lot of diversity trainers in California alone but they do not address cultural and language interpretations of documents such as CEDAW protocols and principles en masse.

