

source, transit, and destination countries to develop strategies for protecting and assisting victims of trafficking and to expand and enhance anti-fraud training to stop the international trafficking of women and girls.

VI. The Secretary of State to coordinate an intergovernmental response to the Government of Ukraine's request to jointly develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking in women and girls from and to Ukraine. The U.S.-Ukraine cooperation will serve as a model for a multi-disciplinary approach to combat trafficking that can be expanded to other countries.

VII. The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Attorney General, to expand and strengthen assistance to the international community in developing and enacting legislation

to combat trafficking in women and girls, to provide assistance to victims of trafficking, and to continue to expand efforts to train legal and law enforcement personnel worldwide.

VIII. The Secretary of State and the Director of the United States Information Agency to expand public awareness campaigns targeted to warn potential victims of the methods used by traffickers.

IX. The President's Interagency Council on Women to convene a gathering of government and nongovernment representatives from source, transit, and destination countries and representatives from international organizations to call attention to the issue of trafficking in women and girls and to develop strategies for combating this fundamental human rights violation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

March 11, 1998

Dear _____:

I write to seek your support in obtaining Senate consent to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is the most comprehensive and detailed international treaty developed to date relating to the rights of women. The United States actively participated in the drafting of CEDAW and signed the treaty in 1980. Although the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted in favor of ratification in 1994, the Senate has not formally considered the treaty since that time.

The rights of women are an issue of global importance—and one that is integral to our foreign policy. The success of any government depends ultimately on ensuring that all its citizens can participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives. Too many societies continue to shunt women to the sidelines, limiting their access to education, health care, and economic opportunity. Moreover, violence against women remains a widespread problem. I think you would agree that, as we enter the next century, we must address these issues. CEDAW provides us with an effective tool for doing so.

I believe that the ratification of CEDAW is critical to our efforts to advance the status of women throughout the world. To date, 161 countries have ratified CEDAW, including all our European allies and most of our important trading partners. The United States is one of the few countries that has not. This impedes our efforts to ensure that women everywhere are treated fairly and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

As you know, U.S. state and federal law already provides strong protections for women and is largely consistent with the provisions of CEDAW. In 1994, the Administration submitted a detailed analysis of the consequences of CEDAW ratification for U.S. law. All concerns at that time were addressed by the small number of reservations, understandings, and declarations upon which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the State Department agreed. These include an explicit understanding that the treaty does not create a right to an abortion.

Today, in celebration of International Women's Day, I am announcing that obtaining Senate advice and consent to the ratification of CEDAW is a top Administration priority during

this session of Congress. I am also announcing my goal of having the full Senate act on CEDAW this year, which marks the 150th anniversary of the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York.

I would very much like to have your support in ratifying CEDAW and look forward to working with you on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader; and Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Telephone Remarks Congratulating Representative-Elect Lois Capps March 11, 1998

President Clinton. Hello, Lois?

Representative-Elect Capps. Hello, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Oh, I didn't know you were on the phone. Congratulations!

Representative-Elect Capps. Well, thank you so much.

President Clinton. I'm so thrilled for you.

Representative-Elect Capps. It was a tremendous experience, and I owe a lot to all of the people who are listening.

President Clinton. Well, you made a great grassroots campaign, and I think you really persuaded people that you would be a strong, independent voice for them. And of course, we were all thrilled that you ran on the issues that I think are critical to the future of the country, on education and the Patients' Bill of Rights and the tobacco issue. I'm just ecstatic. But I know how hard you worked, and you must be so proud today.

Representative-Elect Capps. I'm very proud and very grateful. It's an affirmation of Walter as well.

President Clinton. Certainly it was. It certainly was.

The Vice President is on the phone with me. I know he wants to say something.

Vice President Gore. I'll wait until Dick Gephardt goes. Go ahead, Dick.

Representative Richard A. Gephardt. Thank you, Al. I thank you, Mr. President, for having this call. And Lois, we all here in the House congratulate you on this wonderful victory. It's a real testimony to you and the kind of campaign you ran and the way you related to the

issues that people really care about in your district, education, health care, pensions. We believe this campaign, your campaign, is the formula by which we will win the majority back in the House in 1998.

So, congratulations. God love you and your family. And you're going to carry on in the spirit of your dear, wonderful husband, Walter. And we look forward to having you here next week.

Representative-Elect Capps. Oh, thank you, Mr. Gephardt.

Representative Martin Frost. And Lois, this is Martin Frost. If I could just say a brief word, because Dick and I have to go vote in a minute—something you'll be doing very shortly—this was an extraordinary victory. In fact, we're watching you on television right now; we see you on CNN. The fact that you won by such a significant margin, the 53 to 45, the 13,000-vote margin, is more than any of us had hoped for. We knew you were a terrific candidate, but we were just overwhelmed with your victory. And everyone here is talking about it in the cloakrooms and in the halls and everywhere up here on the Hill today. It is the number one topic, and people can hardly wait for you to get here next week.

Representative-Elect Capps. Could I now say, this is all music, sweet music, to my ears. And I want to thank you, all of you, and that which you represent, for the support that you gave, actually, for the freedom that you all allowed us to have here to run a local race. And that began in the very beginning, when I felt no undue pressure as a grieving widow to make