



Position Statement on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The American Psychoanalytic Association (APsAA) endorses the ratification by the United States of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

This international bill of rights for women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for action to end such discrimination. The 186 countries that have ratified or acceded to CEDAW are legally bound to implement its provisions. The United States is one of only seven countries that have not yet ratified CEDAW.

CEDAW strengthens civil society's efforts to persuade governments to respect women's fundamental human rights and adopt policies to reduce sex trafficking and domestic violence, provide access to education and vocational training, ensure the right to vote, end forced and child marriages, secure inheritance rights, foster women's and maternal health, and ensure the right to work and own a business without discrimination.

Psychoanalysis is based on the dignity and equality of all human beings regardless of age, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or gender expression, physical or psychological condition, or social class, and is a therapeutic entity that aims to relieve suffering, promote understanding and yield healthy development. This cannot be accomplished as long as discrimination and violence against women and girls exists.

APsAA has worked to abolish discrimination in many spheres and is committed to fostering a social environment in which all women, children and their families are valued, experience support and recognition, and in which discrimination and prejudice have no place.

Precedent has been set with the adoption of other position statements on topics such as ERA (1978), Torture (2007), and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Civil Rights (2012). By supporting the reduction of human suffering and disability, respecting human dignity and improving growth and autonomy, CEDAW is consistent with the standards and principles of ethics for psychoanalysts.

APsAA is also concerned with social issues involving the psychological effects of discrimination that CEDAW addresses. It is with this concern that APsAA endorses equal rights for women. These include non-discrimination in the workplace and equal pay for equal work. Although the Equal Pay Act was enacted in 1963, pay discrimination between women and men remains highly problematic. APsAA encourages all efforts to legislate these rights both nationally and locally.

CEDAW has been endorsed by almost 200 organizations as well as leading mental health organizations such as the American Psychiatric Association, Physicians for Human Rights, the American Psychological Association, and the National Association of Social Workers.

APsAA strongly urges the United States Senate to ratify CEDAW now.

References:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

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