



# US Women's Caucus at the UN

## US Recommendations

**“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made “**

--- Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg

The US Women’s Caucus believes that now, more than ever, the US must build a fairer, more equitable society where the rights and needs of women can no longer be ignored and the aspirations for equality agreed to in Beijing 25 years ago must be urgently implemented.

The current COVID 19 pandemic has clearly shown that American women have borne the brunt of the crisis as critical frontline workers, wage earners and primary caregivers at home. Lacking strong health, financial and child care safety nets, four times as many women than men dropped out of the labor market. As the nation rebuilds its economy, steps must be taken to reinforce social safety nets, protect women and girls from ever increasing levels of gender based violence and to ensure equal representation of women at all levels of decision making.

**The US Women’s Caucus urges the US government to adopt a “Feminist Domestic Policy” that would “Build Back Better “ by mainstreaming gender across policies and programs including women at all levels of decision making as policies are designed and modified.**

### **1. Legal Remedies - Review, revise and repeal discriminatory laws against women.**

- Pass the Equal Rights Amendment and ratify the CEDAW treaty.
- Promote the adoption of anti-discrimination laws and support local accountability mechanisms such as those modeled by Cities for CEDAW and Companies for CEDAW.
- Enforce equal pay regulations. Impose penalties, require transparency and regular progress reports.
- Improve labor standards by increasing the minimum wage, which disproportionately affects women.
- Ratify the ILO Convention 189 protecting domestic workers, a majority of whom are women.
- Ratify the ILO Convention 190 protecting women in the workplace.

### **2. Barriers - Remove the barriers that keep women from participating in the workforce and from attaining decision-making and leadership positions.**

- Strengthen the social safety net that includes Unemployment Insurance (UI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Paid Family Leave.
- Adopt a universal healthcare system and assure universal access to sexual, reproductive and maternity care.
- Prioritize the reduction of US maternal mortality, particularly for women of color.
- Establish a top quality nationalized child care system. Subsidize early childhood education.
- Upgrade unsafe public transport systems and provide universal broadband access.

### **3. Stop Violence- Address and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.**

- Enact and enforce laws prohibiting harmful, discriminatory practices against women and girls such as harassment, exploitation, child marriage, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, as well as sex and labor trafficking.
- Reinforce protections to ensure the safety of women and girls in all their diversity at home, in school, at work, online, and in public spaces.

- Protect women in public office, those running for office, human rights and land rights defenders, journalists and those in leadership and decision-making positions from threats and violence.
- Set strict standards that define harassment and violence against women in public life and online.
- Hold media and social media to account for violations by removing harmful content.
- Encourage Congress to re-authorize the Violence Against Women Act ( VAWA) and pass the Hold Accountable and Lend Transparency on Campus Sexual Violence Act ( HALT).
- Expand the Safe from the Start Initiative to respond to violence in emergencies.
- Initiate a nationwide campaign to prevent gun violence and bullying in schools.
- Adopt a survivor-centered approach to policy design and delivery of services.

**4. Leadership Positions- Despite the well documented efficacy of women’s participation in governance and on boards of public and private companies, women are woefully under-represented in leadership positions within government, private industry, on boards and in much of civil society.**

- Adopt and enforce gender equity and diversity standards. Set targets and timetables for government agencies, businesses, unions, and other organizations to adopt gender and diversity goals advancing representation at all levels. Invest in programs, encourage policies and promote collaboration across sectors to advance women in leadership.
- Ensure policies and programs recognize the needs of women and girls in all their diversity, including ethnic and racial minorities, LGBTQI persons and persons with disabilities - recognizing the multiplier effect of these intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Incent public and private organizations to revamp personnel policies to identify, nurture and support female workers and provide the additional training, mentoring and programs needed to move them into positions of authority, including senior management and board roles.
- Invest in capacity-building programs to develop leadership pipelines partnering with women’s organizations, educational institutions, private partnerships and grassroots organizations.
- Promote and invest in technical, vocational and STEM studies that create opportunities for women to move out of lower wage occupations.
- Design and invest in programs that encourage girls to fully and equally participate in sports, internships, apprenticeships and leadership development.
- Invest in and support programs that engage business, religious and civic organizations to raise awareness of the power of including women on boards and at all levels of decision making.
- Invest in campaigns that engage men and boys to become strong allies in the fight for gender equality.
- Promote and invest in gender budgeting processes and disaggregate data collection to track and measure the progress of gender equity and women’s leadership.

**The US Women’s Caucus urges the US government to adopt a “Feminist Foreign Policy” that would guide decisions with other states, agencies, movements and non-state actors, in a manner that would promote gender equality, while also prioritizing peace, justice and full rights for all under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

- Provide robust funding for government-wide development and implementation of strategy for achieving gender equality both at home and abroad.
- Across government agencies, develop training and mentoring programs to identify talent and promote equitable numbers of women into leadership positions.
- Reclaim US’s former leadership position championing women’s rights at the UN by recommitting to the Beijing Platform of Action, the SDG’s and promoting women’s rights at the UN General Assembly, the Human Right Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, and all other international forums.
- Regain credibility at the UN and work for global women’s and human rights by again giving significant financial support to UNFPA and WHO, permanently removing the Global Gag Rule, and paying back \$1 Billion in dues.