

Instructions for Letter Signing

1. Explain the letter. Here are some examples of what you can say:
 - a. We are from the Human Rights Watch Student Task Force and we need your help to protect children's rights here at home and around the world.
 - b. Please sign this petition to our United States Senator Barbara Boxer, urging her to work for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child --- 193 countries have ratified this important treaty, only the US and Somalia have **not** ratified this important treaty.
 - c. It's up to U.S. --- this is the 20th anniversary of the treaty and the US must ratify and show that our country is dedicated to protecting the rights of children around the world!
2. If you have time to share more talking points, you can note any of the following children's rights statistics:
 - a. In the US:
 - i. Approximately 1 in 5 children lives in poverty
 - ii. 8 million children lack health insurance coverage
 - iii. Today, an estimated 8,767 referrals will be made to Child Protective Service agencies.
 - b. In the international community:
 - i. 300 million children go to bed hungry
 - ii. 125 million children under the age of 5 lack access to safe, clean drinking water
 - iii. 218 million children are engaged in child labor; 58% of these children are engaged in hazardous work
3. **Please sign legibly** and include either your school name or home address.
4. Make sure people are signing their names and not writing something else.
5. Make sure people are actually signing and not just printing their names.

Human Rights Watch Student Task Force
11500 W. Olympic Blvd #441
Los Angeles, CA 90064

November 9, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Boxer:

We the undersigned, as members and supporters of Human Rights Watch, express our strong appreciation for your efforts to move forward with U.S. ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). We urge you to keep the pressure on the Obama administration to submit this treaty to the Senate as soon as possible, and we pledge to back you up every step of the way.

We agree with you that children deserve basic human rights, as spelled out in the CRC. We also recognize that CRC repeatedly emphasizes the importance of families, and the role and authority of parents in providing direction and guidance to their children. Around the world, the CRC has been an important tool to help promote protections for the most vulnerable and marginalized children. The conspicuous absence of the United States, along with Somalia, in ratifying the CRC, undermines our nation's international leadership role for children and for human rights.

Although Obama administration officials have promised to review the treaty, there is no specific timeframe for completing that review and submitting it to the Senate – meaning it could still be years before the Senate has a chance to act on ratification. November 20, 2009, marks 20 years since the UN adopted the CRC, and 15 years since the United States signed it – we think that's more than enough time to review this important treaty.

As students, parents, activists, and Americans, we think it's time for the United States to ratify this treaty. Thank you for pursuing this cause, and keep up the pressure!

Sincerely,
