



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1081-2011, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1081

Resolution calling upon the United States Senate to approve and President Barack Obama to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR upon signature, with all due speed.

By Council Members Dromm, Ferreras, James, Lander, Palma, Rose, Williams, Rodriguez and Mendez

Whereas, The United Nation's International Bill of Human Rights provides the basis for international human rights law and is comprised of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); and

Whereas, The United Nations General Assembly adopted the UDHR in 1948; and

Whereas, The United Nations General Assembly adopted both the ICCPR and the ICESCR in 1966, and each covenant entered into force in 1976; and

Whereas, 167 countries, including the United States, have ratified, acceded to, or succeeded to the ICCPR, which commits states parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights, and rights to due process and a fair trial; and

Whereas, 160 countries have ratified, acceded to, or succeeded to the ICESCR, which commits states parties to work toward the granting of economic, social, and cultural rights to individuals, including labor rights and the rights to health, education, and an adequate standard of living that ensures adequate housing, food, water, and sanitation; and

Whereas, The United States signed the ICESCR in 1977 but has not yet ratified it; and

Whereas, In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR to provide a complaint mechanism for individuals who have experienced violations of the ICESCR, which the United States has neither signed nor ratified; and

Whereas, Without the United States' signature and ratification of the Optional Protocol, individuals in the United States who experience violations of rights protected under the ICESCR lack a mechanism to redress violations under the ICESCR; and

Whereas, New York City is home to many human rights watchdog organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, and the Center for Constitutional Rights, that are dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution, the UDHR, and the ICESCR; and

Whereas, Economic, social, and cultural rights, as previously mentioned, include labor rights and the rights to health, education, and an adequate standard of living, which are all important issues to New Yorkers; and

Whereas, Ratification of the ICESCR by the United States would protect persons, including those who live in New York City, from being denied such rights; and

Whereas, By ratifying and signing the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, the United States would be committed to providing a method of redress for individuals in New York City and throughout the nation whose rights under the ICESCR have been violated; and

Whereas, The comprehensive protection of human rights requires the protection of economic, social, and cultural rights as well as the protection of civil and political rights; and

Whereas, Having the ICESCR and Optional Protocol ratified and signed would send a message to the global community that as a democratic nation, the United States is fully committed to ensuring all human rights throughout the country, including in New York City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Senate to approve and

President Barack Obama to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR upon signature, with all due speed.

LS#1929
5/5/11
12:35 p.m.
TC