

## 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 United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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  
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November 9, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We the undersigned, as members and supporters of Human Rights Watch, support U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). We urge you to make it your personal priority to send the CRC to the U.S. Senate for its advice and consent.

Madame Secretary, we know you are a champion for human rights and for children's rights. And yet the United States stands with Somalia as the only holdouts from ratifying the CRC, the most widely accepted human rights instrument in history. Around the world, the CRC has been an important tool to help promote protections for the most vulnerable and marginalized children. We also recognize that the CRC repeatedly emphasizes the importance of families, and the role and authority of parents in providing direction and guidance to their children. The conspicuous absence of the United States, along with Somalia, in ratifying the CRC, undermines our nation's international leadership role for children, for families, 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.

Sincerely,

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