**Time for ordinance against women’s discrimination**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

August 23, 2016

Despite great progress, women’s rights remain a critical issue throughout the world. Internationally, efforts to promote gender equality have been made via the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which the United Nations passed in 1979. CEDAW provides a framework for ensuring women’s human rights and attends to issues of education, safety, health and employment.

President Jimmy Carter signed CEDAW in 1980. But the U.S. has never ratified it — one of only six countries that has not done so.

Cities across the U.S. have begun to implement CEDAW at the local level. For example, San Francisco passed a CEDAW ordinance in 1998, after which it went almost four years without a single intimate partner homicide.

In southwestern Pennsylvania, women make just 70 cents to the dollar (vs. 80 cents nationally) compared with men. All 20 members of the U.S. congressional delegation from Pennsylvania and all Allegheny County representatives to the state General Assembly are men. Most alarmingly, Allegheny County had the highest number of intimate partner homicides of any Pennsylvania county for the past three years. These disturbing statistics highlight the need for attention to issues of gender equality in our region.

In the fall of 2015, the Pittsburgh for CEDAW Campaign was initiated. We have been collaborating with the Women’s Caucus of City Council and Mayor Bill Peduto’s office to draft a local CEDAW ordinance. Because not all women have the same experiences, the ordinance has been written to be inclusive and to address intersecting forms of discrimination, including those related to race/​ethnicity, poverty, sexual orientation and gender identity. The ordinance will be introduced before City Council this fall.

On this 96th anniversary of women’s suffrage, we recognize how far we have come in ensuring the rights of women and girls, as well as how far we have yet to go. We hope you will join us in supporting passage of the Pittsburgh CEDAW ordinance, which will make society safer and more inclusive for us all.

SARA GOODKIND and RACHEL FUSCO

Squirrel Hill

The writers, faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, are members of the Pittsburgh for CEDAW Campaign.