

2007-10-04

Adopted
9 Oct 2007

Sonoma County Democratic Party

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SONOMA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SUPPORTING US RATIFICATION OF THE LAND MINE BAN TREATY

WHEREAS, more than 100 million anti-personnel landmines scattered in the ground in over 60 countries create a dangerous, unhealthy environment for millions of people, daily destroy the prospect of secure livelihoods, and threaten people's very lives; and landmines kill over 10,000 people annually and maim another 12,000—including children, women, and peacekeepers—and new ones continue to be planted, increasing the potential of these deadly weapons to maim and kill long after wars are over; and

WHEREAS, in December 1996 the UN General Assembly by a vote of 156 to zero with ten abstentions adopted a U.S. sponsored resolution calling for completion of a treaty banning the production, stockpiling, use, and export of anti-personnel landmines as soon as possible; and 153 countries, including many of the countries most seriously affected by landmines and most U.S. NATO allies, have ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction, requiring them: never to use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, or transfer antipersonnel landmines; to destroy current stocks and remove all mines in place; and to provide assistance and rehabilitation for landmine victims; and

WHEREAS, in April 1996 fifteen senior retired U.S. military officers—including the former commanding officers of U.S. Armed Forces in Korea, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Desert Storm—urged the President to ban the production, stockpiling, sale, and use of anti-personnel landmines and stated that a ban "would not undermine the military effectiveness or safety of our forces, nor those of other nations"; yet the United States refused to agree to the ban treaty after U.S. efforts to gain exceptions for anti-personnel landmines in the Korean Peninsula and for mixed mine systems that combine anti-tank and anti-personnel landmines, time delays on implementation, and the right to withdraw were rejected; and the absence of the United States as a signatory state to the ban treaty greatly diminishes the U.S. leadership role in all arms control measures;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sonoma County Democratic Central Committee exhorts the President to sign the Land Mine Ban Treaty; and strongly urges the President and the Secretary of State to place the Treaty in the highest category of priority in order to accelerate the Treaty's passage through the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the full U.S. Senate with the goal of United States ratification; and exhorts the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee to pass this Treaty favorably out of Committee; and strongly urges the Senate of the United States to ratify the Treaty and support the Treaty's continuing goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sonoma County Democratic Central Committee distribute copies of this resolution to Senators Feinstein and Boxer, Representatives Thompson and Woolsey, to such media outlets as the Public Relations Committee may deem appropriate; and to all other California county Democratic central committees and to the California Democratic Party for consideration and support; and that the Sonoma County Democratic Central Committee transmit such correspondence as may advance the principles of this resolution.

Sponsored by Thomas Gangale
Chair, Issues and Legislation Committee, Sonoma County Democratic Party

Adapted from National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
<http://www.nccusa.org/assembly/landmines.htm>

Common Sense, Common Good, Common Destiny