



Andrea Ford
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AGENDA May 13, 2025

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May 2, 2025

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Alameda
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE TO IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Adopt an ordinance entitled "Implementation of the Principles of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women," to integrate the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into Alameda County's local laws, policies, and practices.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

The CEDAW is a comprehensive international human rights treaty adopted in 1979 and signed by the United States in 1980. CEDAW affirms principles of equality for women and girls across political, economic, social, cultural, and civil spheres. Although ratified by over 186 United Nations member states, the United States remains one of only six nations that has not ratified the treaty.

In 2010, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution in support of U.S. ratification of CEDAW. Since then, numerous cities and counties across the country have adopted ordinances locally implementing CEDAW principles. Alameda County has a strong history of advancing gender equity through the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women (1975), the Human Relations Commission (1965), and more recently the Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (ARDI) in 2020.

In recent years, local jurisdictions have reignited CEDAW implementation efforts due to national

rollbacks on civil and reproductive rights. In May 2023, the Alameda County Mayors' Conference passed a resolution encouraging all cities in the state to adopt similar ordinances. Further urgency has been fueled by executive actions threatening diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and civil rights more broadly.

The CEDAW does not supersede Federal, State or local laws. Instead, it provides a framework an actionable guidance for the County to help promote gender equity and address discrimination against women and girls.

The proposed ordinance will formalize Alameda County's commitment to gender equity by integrating CEDAW principles into the County's role as an employer, service provider, community partner, and policymaker. It will provide a framework for:

- Conducting a baseline and ongoing intersectional gender analysis of County policies, services, and budget allocations
- Developing a comprehensive Gender Equity Action Plan
- Promoting gender equity in economic development, education, healthcare, housing, public safety, civic engagement, and more
- Ensuring consideration of the unique needs of women and girls, including transgender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) individuals

The ordinance establishes local definitions consistent with CEDAW and inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, and intersectionality. It outlines specific areas of focus including economic opportunity, education access, housing and homelessness, gender-based violence, healthcare, support for justice-impacted women, and civic engagement.

Implementation of the ordinance will be guided by a policy framework adopted by the Board, with support from the Commission on the Status of Women. A gender equity workgroup will oversee the intersectional gender analysis and development of sub-county unit action plans as needed.

SELECTION CRITERIA/PROCESS:

N/A

FINANCING:

Adopting the CEDAW ordinance will have no impact on net County cost.

VISION 2036 GOAL:

Adoption of the CEDAW ordinance directly supports the advancement of Alameda County's Vision 2036 10X Goals by fostering equitable access to comprehensive health services, **Health for All**, preventing and eliminating homelessness (**Eliminate Homelessness**), promoting full and inclusive employment opportunities (**Employment for All**), addressing the systemic causes of poverty and hunger (**Eliminate Poverty & Hunger**), and implementing equitable criminal justice strategies to ensure safer, more resilient communities (**Crime-Free County**) in support of our shared visions of **Safe & Livable Communities, Thriving & Resilient Populations, Healthy Environment**, and a **Prosperous & Vibrant Economy**.

Sincerely,

— DocuSigned by:



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Andrea Ford
Agency Director

Attachment:

1. CEDAW Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-29

AN ORDINANCE ADDING CHAPTER 9.50 TO THE ALAMEDA COUNTY ORDINANCE CODE REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California, does ordain as follows:

SECTION I

The Board of Supervisors makes the following findings in support of this ordinance:

WHEREAS, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international human rights treaty focused on eliminating discrimination against women and girls and achieving gender equality. The treaty addresses women's rights in economic, social, cultural, civil, and political areas. CEDAW was ratified by over 186 member states of the United Nations (UN). Although President Jimmy Carter signed the CEDAW on July 17, 1980, the United States is one of six UN member states that has not yet ratified the treaty. The County of Alameda recognizes that the international adoption and ratification of the CEDAW has significantly advanced gender equity for women and girls around the world, including in the areas of economic development, healthcare, violence against women and girls, and education.

WHEREAS, a growing number of cities and counties adopted local ordinances and resolutions implementing the principles of the CEDAW, beginning in 1998, when San Francisco enacted the first local CEDAW ordinance, followed by the City of Los Angeles in 2003. To date, 11 cities and/or counties have adopted CEDAW ordinances, and at least 29 local jurisdictions passed resolutions affirming support for implementing the CEDAW principles in their local governments.

WHEREAS, the principles espoused in the CEDAW are consistent with the County of Alameda's commitment to ending inequitable gender outcomes and improving the quality of life for women and girls, including transgender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming and anyone female identifying, in the County. The County of Alameda has led several efforts to ensure that women and girls have equal access and opportunity across the County. From the establishment of the Human Relations Commission in 1965, the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1975 which is focused on women's issues and gender equity, and the Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative in 2020, the Board of Supervisors has taken tangible actions to promote gender equity, including using an intersectional lens to ensure the County of Alameda creates a foundation of equity as an employer, service provider, and community and business partner.

WHEREAS, there is a continuing need for the County of Alameda to protect the human rights of women and girls and to locally implement the principles of the CEDAW. Adoption of the CEDAW principles at the county level will help promote gender equity and address discrimination against women and girls within the County, including in the areas of economic development, education, housing and homelessness, gender-based violence and harassment, health care, justice-impacted women, voting rights, and civic engagement.

WHEREAS, the CEDAW does not supersede federal, State, or local laws. Instead, it provides a framework and actionable guidance for the County to help promote gender equity and address

discrimination against women and girls.

WHEREAS, as the County's commitment to gender equity continues to progress and expand, now is the time for the County to formally integrate the CEDAW principles into our local laws and policies.

SECTION II

Chapter 9.50 is hereby added to the Alameda County Ordinance Code and reads as follows:

Chapter 9.50 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

9.50.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to ensure that, to the extent permitted by law, the County of Alameda implements the principles of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and institutionalizes regular and ongoing gender-based analysis of County operations, departments, agencies, services, and programs.

9.50.020 Definitions.

Unless the particular provision or the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall govern the interpretation and application of this Chapter:

- A. "BIPOC" means Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- B. "CEDAW" means the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- C. "County" means the County of Alameda.
- D. "Disaggregated data" means data collected and analyzed by categories such as race, immigration status, gender, age, disability, and others to identify disparities.
- E. "Discrimination against women and girls" means any adverse, unequal and/or unfavorable treatment, including gender-based violence, of women or girls based on sex assigned at birth, gender identity, or expression that limits access to economic, political, or social resources.
- F. "Gender" means the socially constructed characteristics associated with women, men, girls, and boys. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender can vary among cultures and can change over time.
- G. "Gender equity" means addressing discriminatory practices and creating conditions that allow women, girls, and individuals who identify as transgender, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming to achieve full and substantive equality, recognizing that different needs may require different approaches to ensure fair outcomes for all.

- H. "Gender expression" means a person's gender-related appearance or behavior, or the perception of such appearance or behavior, whether or not stereotypically associated with the person's sex assigned at birth.
- I. "Gender identity" means each person's internal understanding of their gender, or the perception of a person's gender identity, which may include female, male, a combination of female and male, neither female nor male, a gender different from the person's sex assigned at birth, or transgender.
- J. "Intersectional" means the interconnected nature of social categorizations and individual characteristics that overlap as interdependent and compounded systems of discrimination. These categorizations and characteristics include, but are not limited to, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, culture, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, education, language skills, and disability.
- K. "Nonbinary" means persons with gender identities that fall outside of the traditional conceptions of strictly either female or male.
- L. "Gender non-conforming" means persons whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate to their gender.
- M. "Sex" means the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex persons. Intersex persons have innate sex characteristics, including sex organs, hormones, chromosomes, that do not fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies.
- N. "Transgender" means a person whose gender identity differs from the person's sex assigned at birth.
- O. "Women" and "women and girls" means all persons who identify or are identified with the gender category of woman or female, whether or not assigned to that category at birth, inclusive of transgender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming and anyone female or femme identifying.

9.50.030 Local Principles of the CEDAW.

It is the goal of the County to implement the principles underlying the CEDAW to promote gender equity and address discrimination against women and girls within the County. The CEDAW principles must be integrated in the County's role as an employer, service provider, fiduciary, and community and business partner, and must apply to women and girls of all identities and categories.

A. Economic Development

1. The County must look for ways to improve its commitment to the elimination of discrimination against women and girls in economic opportunities, including:
 - a. The right to access and receive vocational training for nontraditional jobs
 - b. Promotion, job security, and all benefits and conditions of service, regardless of familial, marital or parental status
 - c. Equal remuneration, including benefits and equal pay with respect to work of equal value

- d. Protection of health and safety in working conditions
 - e. Protection from all forms of harassment, retaliation, hostile work environment, and violent acts in workplaces; and
 - f. The provision of reasonable accommodation for pregnant and lactating people.
2. The County recognizes that family caregiving responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and girls. The County may encourage and, where possible, support the necessary social services to enable all people to balance work responsibilities with family obligations and participation in public life, in particular, through promoting the establishment and development of an accessible, affordable, and quality network of child and family care services and facilities, flexible work schedules, paid family leave and family-friendly workplace policies.
3. The County acknowledges the importance of the care industry, which includes child/family care, elder care, and home health care workers. Currently, many care workers are women, predominantly BIPOC women and immigrants. It must be the goal of the County to look for ways, to the extent of its purview in these areas, for people who work in the care industry to have access to resources that provide economic mobility, including, but not limited to, better remuneration, benefits and career pathways, training and education. This will ensure quality, safe, and responsive care.
4. The County will promote access to safe and affordable housing that utilizes local, State and federal funds to projects and programs that address the high cost of housing, improve community infrastructure and prevent displacement.

B. Education

1. The County must encourage the training of women and girls for nontraditional jobs, including registered apprenticeship programs, two-year degree options, and career technical education.
2. The County must look for ways to facilitate access to training and education for women to re-enter the labor market.

C. Housing and Homelessness

1. The County recognizes the root causes of homelessness and housing insecurity are different for women and girls, and may include factors such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, poverty, and the uneven distribution of caregiving responsibilities. It must be a goal of the County to support policies and programs that understand the unique housing needs of women and girls.
2. The County must promote access to safe and affordable housing for women and girls, while reducing the barriers to securing permanent and supportive housing by promoting county programs that address these needs.
3. The County will encourage ways to support prevention and homeless services that are specifically designed to be gender-responsive to the needs of women and girls, including veterans and BIPOC women and girls.

4. It must be a goal of the County to ensure a coordinated delivery system that expedites the process for housing and makes accessible the supportive services women and girls need to stay housed.. The County may offer referrals including childcare, job training and placement, counseling, mentorship, education, substance-abuse treatment, and public benefits.

D. Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

1. It must be a goal of the County to take and diligently pursue all appropriate measures to prevent and redress sexual and domestic violence and trafficking of women and girls, including to:
 - a. Seek and encourage ways for survivors to receive appropriate protective and support services, including, but not limited to, counseling, shelter, rehabilitation, and hotline services.
 - b. Provide gender-sensitive training regarding sexual and domestic violence and trafficking of women and girls, as appropriate.
 - c. Support public education campaigns regarding violence caused by misogyny; hatred of women and girls, and transgender persons; and gender stereotypes.
2. Sex workers, including those that are transgender, are especially vulnerable to violence and hate crimes. It must be a goal of the County to find ways to help sex workers who have been subject to violence and hate crimes and to prevent such acts.
3. It must be a goal of the County to have a safe and harassment-free environment for women and girls, including within the workplace, public spaces, transit services, and when accessing public services in the general community.

E. Health Care

1. It must be a goal of the County to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women and girls regarding health care, including to equitably facilitate information about and access to quality health care facilities and services, according to the needs of all communities, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, culture, language, socio-economic status, and/or sexual orientation.
2. The County must aim to find ways for all women and girls, including immigrant women and BIPOC women, to access quality, culturally sensitive health services in connection with family planning, prenatal care, delivery, and the post-natal period, referring to free services where possible, as well as access to adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.
3. The County must aim to deliver health services without implicit bias that impacts perceptions of the needs of women and girls.

F. Justice-Impacted Women

1. It must be a goal of the County to provide assistance and opportunities to women and girls impacted by the criminal justice system.
2. The County must continue to support ways to provide employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated women and remove barriers to high quality jobs.

G. Civic Engagement

1. The County must look for ways to encourage civic and political engagement among women, including membership in local commissions, boards, or task forces, and participating in community service.

9.50.040 Implementation Policy.

With support from the Commission on the Status of Women, the Board of Supervisors shall adopt a policy to further implement this Chapter, including the effectuation of a baseline intersectional gender analysis, ongoing iterative intersectional gender analyses, and a Countywide intersectional gender equity action plan (and subsequent sub-County unit action plans, as needed). The gender equity action plan shall address how to integrate human rights principles into the County's operations, how to further implement the local principles of the CEDAW, and the measures recommended to correct deficiencies identified at the countywide level. The Board of Supervisors shall ensure the incorporation of these policies, goals and themes into their future Vision planning, and direct their departmental and agency leadership to do the same at any sub-unit levels.

9.50.050 Enforcement.

In undertaking the enforcement of this Ordinance, the County is assuming an undertaking only to promote the general welfare. It is not assuming, nor is it imposing on its officers and employees, an obligation the breach of which creates any liability in money damages to any person who claims that such breach proximately caused injury. This ordinance does not create any private cause of action.

SECTION III

If any provision of this Ordinance is found to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, that invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of this Ordinance which can be implemented without the invalid provisions, and to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable, and the Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have adopted this Ordinance and each provision thereof irrespective of whether any one or more provisions are found invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise unenforceable.

SECTION IV

This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days from and after the date of passage and before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after its passage it shall be published once with the names of the members voting for and against the same in a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Alameda.

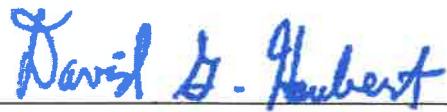
Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California, on the 3rd day of June 2025, by the following called vote:

AYES: Supervisors Fortunato Bas, Márquez, Miley & Tam - 4

NOES: None

EXCUSED: President Haubert

ABSTAINED: None



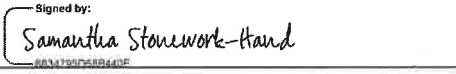
President of the Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Cherry Petters
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Oral
By: 
Deputy Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DONNA R. ZIEGLER, COUNTY COUNSEL

Signed by:
By: 
Samantha N. Stonework-Hand
Assistant County Counsel