



**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**  
United States Section  
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**Dear Mr. President-Elect Obama:**

**We of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United States Section (WILPF US), appreciate many of the priorities you expressed during your election campaign.** A considerable number of them are our priorities as well, and we will certainly work to build support for each of those in our communities across this nation.

**WILPF began in 1915**, when Jane Addams and over a thousand women from both sides in World War I, and from neutral nations, gathered at The Hague determined to put an end to that war and to all wars. Our first international president, Jane Addams, and our first international secretary general, Emily Greene Balch (both from the US), were each awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

**We continue to work to expose the root causes of war and to collaboratively create a world wherein the rule of law, not the rule of force, defines society.**

**We admit there are some areas in which we cannot agree with you.** We will not support "rebuilding the military," for instance. Our nation has unfortunately become increasingly militaristic and we know that militarism and democracy are incompatible. Reducing the military and shifting billions to life enhancing priorities is our own goal for this and all nations.

**Our ultimate goal is to build the Beloved Community**, a term coined by Fellowship of Reconciliation founder Josiah Royce, whose meaning was expanded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our vision of the Beloved Community is a peaceful world where resources are devoted to making sure that every person has food, clean water, housing, a decent standard of health and one in which they are secure enough from a myriad of threats to enjoy their full human rights. (Both Dr. and Coretta Scott King were WILPF members, by the way.)

We organize our priorities on which we hope to cooperate with you into three sections:

- **Leadership in multi-national efforts to end war and militarism**, working to further develop the international institutions and international law that can make peace possible. The US government's reliance on military force to diffuse global crises, exemplified in the 'war on terror' is simply incompatible with democracy and human rights.
- **Promoting human rights for all** as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and now codified into international law is essential to human security and survival.
- **Care for our planet earth** and its increasingly fragile web of life is also essential and incompatible with militarism and war.

(continued)

FIRST INTERNATIONAL  
PRESIDENT  
Jane Addams  
Nobel Peace Prize 1931

FIRST INTERNATIONAL  
SECRETARY  
Emily Greene Balch  
Nobel Peace Prize 1946

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## I. LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO END WAR AND MILITARISM:

**A. Disarmament negotiations at the United Nations.** We fully support your goal of achieving nuclear weapons abolition. U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) before the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in May 2010 is one of our own priorities as a required step along the way.

1. **We will support you in our own current priorities of negotiation of treaties on abolition of nuclear weapons and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.** We hope your Ambassador to the United Nations and her staff will take leadership in the Conference on Disarmament and finally end the blockage, caused primarily by the United States, that has prevented further negotiations on these and other treaties. For background information we refer you to our offices at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. UN staff, diplomats and NGOs all widely use our WILPF web pages at [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org) which have detailed coverage of sessions in the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly First Committee as well as a great deal of other information for those following disarmament negotiations at the UN.
2. **Please support ratification of cluster bomb and land mines treaties.** We know it will be difficult to do everything at once, but we will support your Administration in your efforts to ratify these treaties.
3. **Support a verification protocol in the Bio-weapons treaty.** We hope you will support the necessary verification – which the U.S. had thus far blocked --to prevent nations, including our own, from developing biological weapons.
4. **The U.S. and Zimbabwe were the only nations voting against negotiating a legally binding arms trade treaty** regulating and tracking conventional arms including guns (General Assembly, October 2008). The treaty would not interfere with transfers for legitimate self defense, but could significantly curb violence and civil war in countries across the world where the rule of law has broken down.
5. **We hope your Administration will work actively to bring India, Pakistan and Israel into the NPT** and the various negotiations on steps to nuclear weapons abolition. This would include support of the Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone now supported by all nations in the region except Israel.
6. **As part of this effort, please re-examine the U.S.-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act, which allows India to be the only known nuclear weapon state to participate in nuclear commerce** without signing the NPT. We understand the U.S. government was pressured by U.S. and foreign multinational corporations to quickly pass this measure because they hope for billions in profits. The Bush administration set a dangerous precedent with this act, diminishing the authority of the NPT and jeopardizing human security.
7. **We know that as long as nuclear power is used the temptation and ability to secretly produce nuclear weapons will remain.** We know that this technology has detrimental effects on human health and the environment. We believe nuclear power must also be eliminated. **Do not accept the arguments for nuclear power as clean energy.** It is not. It creates dangerous nuclear waste, pollutes our rivers and will cost the tax payer for enormous subsidies, including to foreign firms like Ariva.
8. **We will support any effort you can make in the dismantling of our permanent war economy** and conversion to an economy of peace. We understand that military spending provides more support to local economies in this country than any other form of federal government spending. Therefore, it is not enough to simply close military bases: alternative avenues to economic development will require significant federal support. We will create the critical mass of political will to support your efforts to develop a robust, peaceful economy.

**B. We will also support efforts of your Administration to bring to a just end all the wars in which the U.S. is currently involved. We are horrified by the U.S. government's unconditional support for Israel's unjustified assault on Gaza. We ask your administration to:**

1. **Call for unimpeded access of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip** and lifting the siege
2. **Investigate Israel's misuse of U.S. weapons** as a first step toward ending arms transfers to Israel
3. **Promote a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East** and press Israel to ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty.
4. **Immediately stop supplying cluster bombs**, land mines, white phosphorus, depleted uranium and other illegal weapons to Israel.
5. **End the 3 billion dollars a year in military aid to Israel.** Swords into Plowshares: the aid should be for education, health care, developing sustainable development and alternative energies.
6. **Do not sell arms to Arab nations but promote peace**, security and a sustainable economy to the whole region by addressing water shortage and developing alternative energies and technology.
7. **Do not support genocidal and racist attacks on Gaza or invasions like the one of Lebanon in 2006** -- help negotiate resolution of rival territorial claims that ensure security on both sides of national borders. Work for step by step dismantling of the wall and of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.
8. **Discourage Hamas violence or violence by any group.** Discourage violence against Israel by means of economic development and human rights policies that help build a viable Palestinian state. Work with both Israel and Palestine to develop policies for the equitable sharing of water, and policies on the right of return that place limits on new immigration and the right of return in order to maintain sustainability.
9. **Use Ireland as an example: recognize that terrorist groups can be engaged politically.** Hamas needs to be engaged as a political entity rather than dismissed as a terrorist organization.
10. **Resume a Palestinian-Israeli peace process** taking into account former agreements and UN resolutions since 1947. Using local peacemaking traditions such as Sulha, build on what already exist in the local Peace movement, Neve-Shalom/Wahat Al Salam and other groups.

**C. We will also support a genuine peace process in Iraq and Afghanistan\*, and reliance on negotiation and positive supports for democracy, human rights and development in relations with Iran, Syria, Lebanon and the rest of the Middle East. More war is not the answer.**

You were right in opposing the invasion of Iraq. The relations of the United States and Britain with Iraq have been interventionist and exploitative for decades. WILPF could not possibly support the inhumane sanctions, the long term deliberate destruction of water and electricity infrastructure, the *Shock and Awe* bombing, or the often brutal military occupation of Iraq. The blatant war profiteering that followed and the spate of executive orders aimed at gaining control of Iraq's oil resources shamed our nation before the world. Undoing the damage will be difficult, but we will support all efforts at righting the wrong that has been done.

1. **Troops in Iraq should not be sent to Afghanistan.**
2. **End the war and occupation of Iraq.**
3. **No invasion of Iran.**
4. **Close Guantanamo Bay U.S. Military Base** and cede that property back to Cuba.
5. **Condemn torture** and close all military prisons operated by the United States outside of our country. Bring our laws and practice into full compliance with the Convention Against Torture which the U.S. has already ratified. Mainstream human rights education into the training of all military personnel.
6. **Urge ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.** Those who defy international human rights law and commit grave crimes against humanity should be subject to its terms and jurisdiction. Osama Bin Laden and leaders of El Qaeda should be

apprehended as criminals, but as all alleged criminals should be granted a fair trial before the ICC or a national court that can meet its high standards.

**D. WILPF urges you and your Administration to support United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), UN peace keeping and peace building, building a culture of peace and non-violence for our children and support activation of UN Charter Article 26:**

1. **Support inclusion of equal representation of women at peace negotiations**, in peace building enterprises and in prevention of deadly conflict, as mandated in UNSCR 1325. We encourage your Administration to join other nations in making a country plan for full implementation of the resolution. Our PeaceWomen project, <http://www.peacewomen.org>, monitors the implementation of this resolution and can be a valuable resource to your administration.
2. **Support the UN Blue Helmets for genuine peace keeping operations.** Also support the newly formed UN Peace Building Commission and increasing UN efforts to prevent deadly conflict. Do not allow concepts such as the "Responsibility to Protect" to be used for narrowly self serving purposes like that of the U.S. in Somalia which has had long lasting disastrous consequences.
3. **Join other nations of the world in building a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world** as proclaimed in United Nations Resolution 53/25 establishing the decade of peace and non-violence for our children.
4. **Support UN Charter Article 26** which charges the Security Council with establishment of a system for regulation of armaments and maintaining peace and security with the least diversion of resources and expenditure to the world's militaries. The Security Council has failed to grapple with this, though WILPF welcomed the November 19 2008 debate, introduced by Costa Rica, as a faltering first step. See <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/2008/december.html#6> .

**II. PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL AS SET FORTH IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS NOW CODIFIED INTO INTERNATIONAL LAW**

WILPF women early chose freedom as a part of our mission to end war and the causes of war. We rejoiced when WILPF supporter Eleanor Roosevelt facilitated the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, when the world was recovering from the devastation of history's cruelest war to date. Since then all thirty of the UDHR articles have been codified into international law in eight human rights treaties and their protocols. Unfortunately the U.S. has ratified only three of these eight treaties, and is lagging behind in bringing domestic laws into compliance. We are the only nation in the world, other than Somalia which is currently a failed state, to have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Ours is one of only seven governments which have not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW, and we welcome your promised support for this! To our great detriment, the U.S. has not ratified the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which codifies the last ten articles of the UDHR into law, and establishes human rights to shelter, education, health care, jobs, and social security – President Franklin Roosevelt's vision of freedom from want. All members of the European Union are among those 159 nations which have ratified this treaty.

**A. WILPF believes that the United States can most effectively improve the human rights situation internationally by more rigorously adhering to internationally recognized human rights standards and laws domestically.** Because of its size and influence, the U.S. is uniquely positioned to lead by example; conversely, every time the U.S. fails to uphold the human rights of its most vulnerable residents we provide a convenient excuse other tyrannical regimes. We would support any efforts your administration undertakes to bring the U.S. into greater alignment with best practices in the recognition and protection of human rights. Specifically, we make the following recommendations.

1. **As President, you should immediately issue an Executive Order establishing an Interagency Working Group on Human Rights**, with high level leadership, to serve as the effective focal point for implementing human rights treaties *domestically*. This executive order can be modeled on E.O. 13107, but containing an expanded list of relevant agencies as well as other refinements designed to ensure the success of the new Working Group. These changes are outlined by Catherine Powell in her "Human Rights at Home: A Domestic Policy Blueprint for the New Administration" and published by the American Constitution Society in October, 2008.
2. **In addition to this implementation working group, your administration should work toward the creation of an independent, nonpartisan national human rights commission** responsible for monitoring compliance with international human rights treaty law by public and governmental bodies as well as provide expertise and training to these same bodies to ensure progress in realizing full implementation. The administration should support legislation to establish such a body, which could be created by restructuring and strengthening the existing U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and converting it into an effective U.S. Commission on Civil and *Human* Rights.
3. **End abusive military recruiting of children** by adopting a straight eighteen rule for enlistment.
4. **End military presence in civilian, public schools** and redirect the public resources currently subsidizing Junior ROTC into incentive programs promoting the adoption of bonafide peace education, human rights, and peer conflict resolution curricula in all public schools as per UN recommendations on compliance with OPAC
5. **Timely and forthright reporting on progress made** toward addressing the Concluding Observations made in response to the 2007 U.S. report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and participation in the April 2009 Durban Review conference. **To work on racism and racial justice we must work on economic justice** and the racial wealth divide.
6. **Demonstrate leadership in drafting health care reform legislation** that moves the country toward a universal single payer insurance program, as envisioned in House Resolution 676 (110<sup>th</sup> Congress.). **An integral part of economic reform must be a universal single-payer health care system** whose foremost concern is the welfare of all our citizens, not the insurance or pharmaceutical industries.
7. **Ratification of remaining three human rights treaties previous Presidents have already signed**, and adoption of other core human rights treaties introduced during the past eight years including the disabilities treaty and the treaty protecting human rights of migrant workers and their families; reporting regularly to the UN on those three we have ratified, and bringing our own laws into compliance
8. **Passage and full funding of the International Violence Against Women Act** with language safeguarding the full spectrum of women's human rights (as outlined in UNSCR 1325) intact.
9. **Fulfill US treaty obligations to Native Americans**. Heed their demands that we remove uranium mining and nuclear weapons waste and storage sites from their tribal lands.
10. **Endorse and work to pass at the United Nations an "International Right to Water Treaty."** In 1948, 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were adopted by all nations, but water was not listed as a "right," perhaps because the threat of scarcity was not yet looming. Today, we need one more article, the "Right to Water." A first step was taken in November 2002, when 144 countries signed "General Comment 15: on the 'Right to Water'" declaring access to water is fundamental to realization of all human rights. A worldwide movement calls for Article 31 to be added to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishing access to clean water as a fundamental human right.
11. **End the 46 year old U.S. blockade against Cuba** and to establish a normalization of relations between the two countries based on mutual respect for national sovereignty and human rights and begin work toward lifting certain parts of the travel ban especially for

Cuban Americans and educational purposes. Lifting the travel ban for both U.S. peoples traveling to Cuba and for Cubans coming to the U.S. for educational and cultural purposes is important to educate the U.S. people about the reality of Cuban society and the eventual complete lifting of the blockade.

**B. Economic justice and economic human rights as provided in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are a WILPF priority.** If government does not control corporations, they will control the government. From this premise we derive the following proposals for this time of great opportunity.

1. **A taxpayers' bailout of Wall Street** must make taxpayers the controlling partners of Wall Street.
2. **A taxpayers' bailout of the auto industry** must come with a paramount guarantee of direct benefits to auto workers, consumers and the environment, not auto executives or their stockholders.
3. **We must undertake a massive reconstruction of U.S. infrastructure** that has fallen apart from decades of laissez-faire government. **As part of the economic stimulus package, create a National Clean Water Trust Fund.** In the U.S. 85% of the public is served by municipal drinking and wastewater treatment/sewer systems. Most have suffered years of neglect and many are as much as 100 years old. Leaking pipes waste hundreds of billions of gallons of water already treated for use at taxpayer expense. Leaking sewer pipes contaminate groundwater. To head off privatization through lease, sale or public-private contracts by cash-strapped cities, long-term funding is needed. Funding is not just for repairs, but to up-grade pipes and wastewater systems to handle rising demand, meet new drinking water standards, and prevent storm and sewer spills that increasingly threaten public health. The Clean Water and Safe Water Acts mandate that the Federal government provide funds to states through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund for major infrastructure needs which have been under funded for years. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that \$22 billion is needed each year for our water infrastructure. Yet, in 2008, the Bush administration requested only \$688 million for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, the lowest in history. Channel any federal supports to public water utilities rather than to for-profit corporations.
4. Many of our citizens are looking to you to impose draconian temporary measures to save capitalism and restore the economy as it was prior to this current economic collapse. **In WILPF we believe capitalism cannot survive unless it is subject to regulations and tax policies that recognize the responsibility of those who pursue wealth to the human rights and human security of all.** At present Scandinavian and Costa Rican economies are among those best succeeding at this. All European economies have a better balance of capitalism and collective responsibility for human needs –including economic human rights – than does the United States.

### **III. CARE FOR OUR PLANET EARTH AND ITS INCREASINGLY FRAGILE WEB OF LIFE IS ALSO ESSENTIAL AND INCOMPATIBLE WITH MILITARISM AND WAR.**

Here are suggested WILPF priorities for your Administration for the care of our only home, the planet earth.

1. **Control and remediate pollution that threatens all water supplies in the U.S. and impacts public health.** Across the country and especially on Native American lands, precious water resources are continually being polluted by factories, agriculture and the military. The cumulative body burden of these toxics is shown to be harming public health from conception to old-age, leading to disease and death. Controlling pollution and harm to public health is a preventative measure that would reduce the overall healthcare costs, protect workers, and people and communities now and into the future.
2. **Create economic stimulus jobs cleaning up nuclear waste sites.** Such clean up is generally underfunded or neglected. Dismantling nuclear weapons can provide skilled jobs for

nuclear scientists. **Mandate military clean up of unexploded ordnance on military bases** before turning them over to civilian control.

3. **Take climate change seriously** and help negotiate and ratify appropriate new treaties controlling carbon emissions – the next steps after the Kyoto treaty. Promote a green economy, green buildings and green transportation. Avoid construction of massive new highways, but consider more modern green public and freight transportation.
4. **Work with Congress on the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development, Employment (TRADE) Act of 2008 to review and renegotiate all international trade agreements to ensure fair and democratic trade to protect labor, the environment and water source, and public health.** WILPF sees this as a starting point for a new dialogue on developing an alternative fair model based on a more democratic, participatory and transparent process that prioritizes enhancing human rights and equitable development. The current federal approach to international trade puts the corporate profits of a few above human rights, public health, the environment and prosperous local communities.
5. **Begin reforming trade regimes by excluding water from international trade agreements.** All water services (including water utilities), bulk water transport and sale of bulk water, and water sources, must be excluded from all international trade agreements currently in force, and not included in any future free trade agreements, including NAFTA, CAFTA, GATT, and GATS.
6. **Put a halt to the undemocratic and corporate-led Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP),** because it excludes Congressional oversight, lacks any consultation with civil society, and leads to further deregulation that benefits only corporations and has led to an increase in militarization and violation of civil liberties.
7. **Recognize the danger of future wars over water and support equitable use at sustainable levels by all parties to disputes over water use.** For example, many of Israel's settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have appropriated a significant amount of the available water, diminishing Palestinian agricultural capacity and further destabilizing relations between these two neighbors.

**We recognize that the breadth of our priorities may seem unusual.** Since our inception, we have understood that peace is not simply the absence of war. This is why our work to build the Beloved Community through the full implementation of human rights on the local, national, and international level is as important to us as disarmament and the end of illegal occupations.

The WILPF has been advising US presidents since our inception. **Just as we helped President Woodrow Wilson define his Fourteen Points, we offer our expertise in international relations and domestic policy to your administration.** We look forward to working with you to create the foundation for true peace and universal freedom.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at our national headquarters in Boston. Rest assured that we and our members will continue to contact you throughout your tenure regarding our priorities.

Sincerely,

Nancy Munger  
WILPF US Co-President

Laura Roskos  
WILPF US Co-President