



THE PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
IN GENEVA

February 15, 2018

Mr. Hernan Vales  
Ms. Federica Morvay  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights

Dear Mr. Vales and Ms. Morvay:

Thank you for your letter of January 15, 2018, seeking the views of all Member States on information to be taken into account during the preparation of draft guidelines on equal participation in political and public affairs, and/or that could assist in the informal consultation process on the draft guidelines.

Please find the United States response attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Mack".

Jason R. Mack  
U.S. Deputy Permanent  
Representative to the UN Human  
Rights Council

## **SUBJECT: U.S. Response to OHCHR on equal participation in political and public affairs**

The United States seeks to emphasize the importance of equal participation, access to decision-making and political leadership as foundational to representative societies.

The United States is wholly committed to the empowerment of all citizens around the world. There is compelling evidence that broader and equal participation in politics and decision-making leads to policies that are more inclusive and economic and social benefits for all of society.

Internationally, the U.S. government has invested in increasing women's political participation and leadership. Our programs are holistic and they support capacity and confidence building at all stages of political progression and activism, from voters to candidates to elected officials.

The Women, Peace, and Security Act outlines the United States' commitment to expand women's leadership and participation in decision-making in places where they are most marginalized around the world through efforts to resolve conflict, promote peace, and counter violent extremism.

The U.S. government is actively engaged in combating all types of discrimination. In many cases, state authorities have entered into work sharing arrangements with each other to ensure effective handling of situations where jurisdiction overlaps.

U.S. law also includes other more general protections for persons with disabilities that reflect an effort to eliminate the unjustified institutional isolation of individuals with disabilities. Appropriate agencies are directed to work together to identify ways to improve access to housing, community support, independent living arrangements, and increase their participation in society.

Increasing women's meaningful participation in political and public life and addressing barriers that prevent some individuals with disabilities from enjoying meaningful lives in their communities is important for building and sustaining representative societies. The United States' commitment to a fair and equal democracy inspires and encourages every citizen to participate in political and public affairs without fear of discrimination.