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SANDERS INTRODUCES U.N. RIGHTS OF THE CHILD RESOLUTION

Noting that two times as many American children live in poverty as in any other industrialized nation, Rep. Bernard Sanders announced today that he has introduced a resolution calling on the President to sign the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"The children of America are hurting and they're hurting very, very badly," Sanders said. "Having the President sign the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child will not in itself solve the problems facing our children, but it will take us a major step forward in focusing attention on the plight of our children and developing the specific legislation and appropriations which will deal with that crisis."

The resolution is being introduced by Sanders in the House and by Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, in the Senate. It calls on the president to sign the U.N. treaty which outlines basic responsibilities nations have to their children, such as the right to health care, shelter, food and a decent standard of living. It is supported by the Children's Defense League and many other child advocacy organizations.

Because of President Bush's opposition to the treaty, the U.S. today is the only western industrialized nation which has not signed or ratified the treaty. Sanders said he is optimistic that President-elect Clinton will sign the document.

Sanders introduced the resolution last week. Already 42 co-sponsors have signed on to the resolution including Reps. Henry Waxman of California, a subcommittee chairman in the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee, and House Women's Caucus co-chair Patricia Schroeder of Colorado. Leahy plans to introduce the resolution in the Senate when that chamber convenes next week.

Sanders, speaking at a morning news conference, noted that the U.S. has the highest child poverty rate in the industrialized world, with 20 percent of the nation's children living at or below the poverty level. The U.S. also ranks 20th in the world in infant mortality and 31st in the world in low-birthweight babies. More than 10 million children, or 15 percent of all American children, lack health insurance.

Sanders said he is hopeful that the resolution will spur the passage of legislation important to children, including national, universal health insurance, full funding for WIC and other nutritional programs and tax credits for families with children.

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