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United Nations' threat: No more parental rights

Expert: Pact would ban spankings, homeschooling if children object

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By Chelsea Schilling
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A United Nations human rights treaty that could prohibit [children](#) from being spanked or homeschooled, ban youngsters from facing the death penalty and forbid [parents](#) from deciding their families' [religion](#) is on [America's](#) doorstep, a legal [expert](#) warns.

Michael Farris of Purcellville, Va., is president of [ParentalRights.org](#), chairman of the [Home School Legal Defense Association](#) and chancellor of [Patrick Henry College](#). He told WND that under the [U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), or CRC, every decision a parent makes can be reviewed by the government to determine whether it is in the child's best interest.



"It's definitely on our doorstep," he said. "The left wants to make the Obama-Clinton era permanent. Treaties are a way to make it as permanent as stuff gets. It is very difficult to extract yourself from a treaty once you begin it. If they can put all of their left-wing socialist policies into treaty form, we're stuck with it even if they lose the next election."

The 1990s-era document was ratified quickly by 193 nations worldwide, but not the United States or Somalia. In Somalia, there was then no recognized government to do the formal recognition, and in the United States there's been opposition to its power. Countries that ratify the treaty are bound to it by international law.

Although [signed by Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the U.N., on Feb. 16, 1995](#), the U.S. Senate never ratified the treaty, largely because of conservatives' efforts to point out it would create that list of rights which primarily would be enforced against parents.

The international treaty creates specific civil, economic, social, cultural and even economic rights for every child and states that "the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration." While the treaty states that parents or legal guardians "have primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child," Farris said government will ultimately determine whether parents' decisions are in their children's best interest. The treaty is monitored by the CRC, which conceivably has enforcement powers.

According to the [Parental Rights website](#), the substance of the CRC dictates the following:

- Parents would no longer be able to administer reasonable spankings to their children.
- A murderer aged 17 years, 11 months and 29 days at the time of his crime could no longer be sentenced to life in prison.

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- Children would have the ability to choose their own religion while parents would only have the authority to give their children advice about religion.
- The best interest of the child principle would give the government the ability to override every decision made by every parent if a government worker disagreed with the parent's decision.
- A child's "right to be heard" would allow him (or her) to seek governmental review of every parental decision with which the child disagreed.
- According to existing interpretation, it would be illegal for a nation to spend more on [national](#) defense than it does on children's welfare.
- Children would acquire a legally enforceable right to leisure.
- Teaching children about Christianity in schools has been held to be out of compliance with the CRC.
- Allowing parents to opt their children out of sex education has been held to be out of compliance with the CRC.
- Children would have the right to reproductive health information and services, including abortions, without parental knowledge or consent.

(Story continues below)

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"Where the child has a right fulfilled by the government, the responsibilities shift from parents to the government," Farris said. "The implications of all this shifting of responsibilities is that parents no longer have the traditional roles of either being responsible for their children or having the right to direct their children."

The government would decide what is in the best interest of a children in every case, and the CRC would be considered superior to state laws, Farris said. Parents could be treated like criminals for making every-day decisions about their children's lives.



Michael Farris

"If you think your child shouldn't go to the prom because their grades were low, the U.N. Convention gives that power to the government to review your decision and decide if it thinks that's what's best for your child," he said. "If you think that your children are too young to have a Facebook account, which interferes with the right of communication, the U.N. gets to determine whether or not your decision is in the best interest of the child."

He continued, "If you think your child should go to church three times a week, but the child wants to go to church once a week, the government gets to decide what it thinks is in the best interest of the children on the frequency of church attendance."

He said American social workers would be the ones responsible for implementation of the policies.

Farris said it could be easier for President Obama to push for ratification of the treaty than it was for the Clinton administration because "the political world has changed."

At a [Walden University presidential debate](#) last October, Obama indicated he may take action.

"It's embarrassing to find ourselves in the company of Somalia, a lawless land," Obama said. "I will review this and other treaties to ensure the United States resumes its global leadership in human rights."

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been a strong supporter of the CRC, and she now has direct control over the treaty's submission to the Senate for ratification. The process requires a two-thirds vote.

Farris said Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., claimed in a private meeting just before Christmas that the treaty would be ratified within two years.

In November, a group of three dozen senior foreign policy figures urged Obama to strengthen U.S. relations with the U.N. Among other things, they asked the president to push for Senate approval of treaties that have been signed by the U.S. but not ratified.

Partnership for a Secure America Director Matthew Rojansky helped draft the statement. He said the treaty commands strong support and is likely to be acted on quickly, according to an Inter Press Service report.

While he said ratification is certain to come up, Farris said advocates of the treaty will face fierce opposition.

"I think it is going to be the battle of their lifetime," he said. "There's not enough political capital in Washington, D.C., to pass this treaty. We will defeat it."

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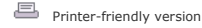
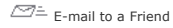
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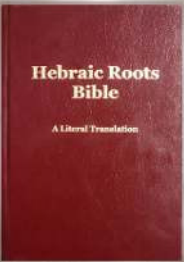
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