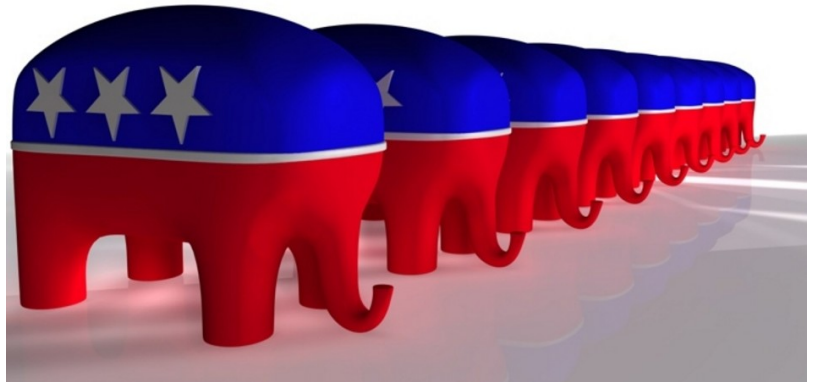




Written by [Alex Newman](#) on December 4, 2012

## Senate GOP Kills Controversial UN Disability Treaty

Responding to a tsunami of organized opposition against a highly controversial United Nations disability treaty known as the “[UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)” (CRPD), on December 4, 38 GOP senators voted against a coalition of 61 Democrats and so-called “RINO” Republicans to kill the agreement by denying a two-thirds majority needed for ratification. The [broad alliance of critics](#) that came together to ultimately defeat the UN CRPD scheme had slammed it as everything from a serious threat to national sovereignty and parental rights to an underhanded power grab by global bureaucrats and pro-abortion forces.



Activists promptly celebrated the victory as soon as the news broke, sending out mass e-mails praising the vote as a big win for Americans and for liberty but a serious setback for the scandal-plagued UN. Supporters of the global organization and its latest effort to impose [international control over U.S. policy](#), however, lamented the defeat, pointing out that many of the most oppressive regimes on Earth had already ratified the controversial treaty.

In the United States, ratification of international treaties made in accordance with the U.S. Constitution requires a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate. Critics pointed out that some of the 2006 treaty's provisions would have purported to expand the federal government's powers beyond constitutionally permissible limits. But despite analyst predictions that the UN CRPD vote would be won or lost on a razor thin margin, as well as the fact that [eight UN-supporting Republican senators](#) broke ranks, opponents of the scheme held a comfortable margin of victory.

The massive outcry about the treaty from activists and the heavy-weight coalition of non-profit organizations that rallied against the scheme undoubtedly played a key role in blocking ratification, according to analysts. “Thanks to all of you, Americans experience a great victory for freedom today,” noted the Home School Legal Defense Association, which helped lead opposition to the treaty among homeschoolers concerned about multiple provisions in the treaty dealing with parental rights. “Freedom for people to act morally and according to their beliefs is of paramount importance to us. But we would not be able to accomplish anything without engaged citizens who are willing to fight for their freedoms.”

Also important to the outcome, however, was opposition by 36 Republican senators who had earlier signed a letter pledging to oppose the consideration of any treaties at all during the lame-duck session. Lawmakers, of course, know very well that Americans are generally suspicious, if not hostile, to the UN, alternatively blasted and ridiculed by critics as a “dictators club.” So Democrats and President Obama saw the post-election period as a perfect opportunity to ram through controversial international agreements that, under normal circumstances at least, would be much less likely to pass.



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The strongest opposition to the UN CRPD came from a powerful alliance of liberty-minded American organizations with a diverse array of concerns. Homeschoolers, for example, warned that the agreement purports to grant national governments broad and dangerously vague powers to intrude on family life, supposedly to ensure that parents of disabled children are being cared for [according to the UN's dictates](#). Especially troubling to critics were references to the "best interests" of the child, which analysts [have long warned would eventually put politicians, not parents, in charge of making decisions concerning children](#).

Also key to the victory were organizations concerned about further UN infringements on American sovereignty, ranging from the more generally pro-establishment Heritage Foundation to groups like the Eagle Forum and the constitutional conservative group The John Birch Society, which has opposed U.S. government funding or membership in the UN for decades. "We congratulate the senators who stood for American sovereignty by refusing to ratify this treaty," Heritage Action chief Michael Needham was [quoted as saying](#) after the vote.

Proponents of self-determination and national sovereignty warned that the treaty would have granted the controversial global organization even more power, forcing the U.S. government to defer to an unaccountable international "committee" on disability issues. With the treaty claiming that the [definition of disability is "evolving,"](#) meanwhile, analysts blasted the potential for even further UN power grabs in the future as well.

"As can be seen in the UN's official documents and in the conduct of the UN since 1945, the world body is constantly accumulating power," [explained](#) JBS President John F. McManus in a piece urging Americans to contact their senators in opposition to the treaty for more than a few reasons. "It has already gained much and CRPD is another step toward total power."

More than a few liberty-minded senators also expressed concerns about the sovereignty aspects. Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), who had [already helped defeat a Democrat-led sneak attempt to ratify the treaty earlier this year](#), for example, said that in addition to threatening parental rights, the UN CRPD "undermines U.S. sovereignty" and seeks to "internationalize domestic policy." Conservative Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) issued similar warnings. Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), a powerful and respected Republican, [said](#) he did not support "potentially overzealous international organizations with anti-American biases that infringe upon American society."

Another key segment of the coalition that helped defeat the treaty was pro-life activists, who warned that Article 25 would purport to require "free or affordable" access to "sexual and reproductive health," as well as so-called "population-based" programs. "It is disguised as a way to 'help' the disabled. Instead it intentionally sacrifices the most vulnerable — the disabled and the unborn — all in the name of population control," [said](#) International Right to Life Federation chief Bradley Mattes. "Many don't realize that this international treaty could potentially supersede future attempts to overturn *Roe v. Wade*."

Citing a series of bizarre arguments ranging from claims that the treaty would not have changed anything to a dubious talking point put forward by Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) that the scheme could have possibly helped disabled American veterans abroad, Democrats were united in their support for ratification. Supporters claimed, for example, that because the treaty was partly modeled on the Americans with Disabilities Act, it would not require any modifications to U.S. policy for now. Virtually everyone acknowledged that the United States already has among the most robust protections for disabled citizens of any country in the world.



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“This treaty is not about America, it’s about America changing the world,” [declared](#) Sen. Kerry, who chairs the Foreign Relations Committee and was one of the primary promoters of the failed scheme. Some big government- and UN-supporting Republicans apparently agreed with the reasoning. “This treaty is simply an expansion of that kind of rights to people all over the world who don’t have them today. It is not an infringement of American sovereignty,” claimed Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), adding that opposition to the global scheme came mostly from conservatives who do not normally support U.S. government cooperation with the UN. It is not clear how U.S. ratification would have extended the rights of disabled people around the world, but that argument was made by more than a few supporters.

In the final analysis, proponents of national sovereignty and individual liberty won the battle — for now. However, Democrats and RINOs are far from finished trying to impose UN treaties on the American people purporting to grant the federal government and international bureaucrats coercive powers that are not listed in the Constitution. Whether the latest defeat will discourage any further efforts to seek ratification of planetary schemes during this lame-duck session remains unclear. But with the growing opposition to the controversial UN among Americans, analysts say it will not be easy to do, at least not anytime soon.

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