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**Editorial**

**The Global Plight of Disabled Children**

**By** [**THE EDITORIAL BOARD**](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/opinion/editorialboard.html)

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A United Nations report, [“The State of the World’s Children,”](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_69379.html) underscores the moral bankruptcy of Senate Republicans who blocked ratification of a treaty to help disabled people around the world. There is scant data on how many children have such disabilities or how their lives are affected. One outdated estimate is that some 93 million children, one in 20 of those 14 or younger, live with a moderate or severe disability of some kind. The issue is how they might be helped to overcome their disabilities and become productive members of their societies.

A United Nations convention would ban discrimination against persons with disabilities and accord them the same rights as those without disabilities. It has been ratified by 127 countries and the European Union. President Obama has signed it, but, in December, the Senate, though supporting the convention by a hefty 61 to 38, fell five votes short of the two-thirds majority needed for ratification.

This was mostly because Senate Republicans caved in to far-right ideologues who contended, erroneously, that the convention would infringe on American sovereignty, usher in socialism, and allow United Nations bureaucrats to prohibit home-schooling or wrench disabled children from their parents’ arms.

The new United Nations report finds that children with disabilities are the least likely to receive health care or go to school and are among the most vulnerable to violence, abuse and neglect, especially if they are hidden away in institutions because of social stigma or parental inability to raise them.

The disabled children and their communities would benefit if the children were accommodated in schools, workplaces, vocational training, transportation and local rehabilitation programs — and if all countries ratified the convention and a related convention on the rights of children.