

Coalition Statement Opposing the Global Gag Rule 2017

We join together as diverse voices from a variety of sectors to oppose the harmful global gag rule, also known as the Mexico City Policy. While the Helms Amendment restricts U.S. foreign assistance funding for abortions “as a method of family planning,” the global gag rule goes a step further by blocking aid to foreign organizations who use their own non-U.S. funds to provide information, referrals, or services for legal abortion or to advocate for access to abortion services in their own country.

The global gag rule causes serious harm in countries around the world. The policy interferes with the doctor-patient relationship by restricting medical information healthcare providers may offer, limits free speech by prohibiting local citizens from participating in public policy debates, and impedes women’s access to family planning by cutting off funding for many of the most experienced health care providers who chose to prioritize quality reproductive-health services and counseling over funding that restricts care and censors information.

When in place, the negative impacts of the global gag rule have been broad and severe: health services have been dismantled in a number of communities; clinics that provided a range of reproductive, maternal, and child health care, including HIV testing and counseling, were forced to close; outreach efforts to hard to reach populations were eliminated; and access to contraceptives was severely limited, resulting in more unintended pregnancies and more unsafe abortions. Here is the testimony of one organization that experienced the impact of the global gag rule:

“After refusing the terms of the gag rule in 2001, at Family Health Options Kenya we lost a significant amount of funding from USAID with serious and damaging effects on our ability to provide crucial reproductive health and family planning services. We were forced to close six clinics, all of which provided critical services to poor and underserved populations in urban, peri-urban and rural areas including family planning, voluntary counseling and testing for HIV, management of sexually transmitted infections, post-abortion care and maternal and child health services. Following the closure of these clinics in 2005, at least 9,000 people – primarily women and children – were left with little or no access to health care.” - FHOK, 2013

Countries around the world are making significant progress in improving women’s health and the global gag rule undermines that momentum. Developing and donor countries alike are stepping up to prioritize and make tangible headway in closing the gap on access to modern family planning through increased funding and better policies. This momentum, which includes global partnerships like Family Planning 2020, builds on the essential foundation of U.S. investments in this sector. The global gag rule seriously hinders the effectiveness of U.S. global health investments and the growing global progress that we, as a global community, have made in expanding access to family planning for couples worldwide and in reducing maternal mortality.

The U.S. has been a leader when it comes to promoting democracy, women’s health, and human rights around the world. U.S. foreign aid should never be used as a tool to limit women’s access to health care or to censor free speech. Organizations should not be disqualified from receiving U.S. assistance because they use their own funds to provide health services and information that are legal in their home country and legal in the U.S. **Supporters of global health and development, women’s rights, gender equality, and free speech oppose the harmful global gag rule and reject efforts to undermine the health and rights of women around the world.**

Endorsing Organizations:

1. 30 for 30 Campaign
2. Advocates for Youth
3. AFL-CIO
4. AIDS Foundation of Chicago
5. AIDS United
6. ACT UP NY
7. Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking
8. American Academy of Pediatrics
9. American Association of University Women (AAUW)
10. American Civil Liberties Union
11. American College of Nurse-Midwives
12. American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
13. American Federation of Teachers
14. American Humanist Association
15. American Jewish World Service
16. American Medical Student Association
17. Americans United for Separation of Church and State
18. amfAR (The Foundation for AIDS Research)
19. Amnesty International USA
20. Amref Health Africa
21. Anti-Defamation League
22. Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
23. AVAC
24. Black Women's Health Imperative
25. Breakthrough
26. carafem
27. CARE USA
28. Catholics for Choice
29. Center for Biological Diversity
30. Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
31. Center for Inquiry
32. Center for Reproductive Rights
33. Center for Women Policy Studies
34. Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
35. Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
36. Consortium of Universities for Global Health
37. Council for Global Equality
38. CREDO
39. Disciple Public Witness; Disciples of Christ
40. Disciples for Choice
41. Disciples Justice Action Network
42. DKT International
43. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
44. EngenderHealth
45. Everywoman Everywhere
46. Feminist Majority
47. FP2020
48. Freedom From Religion Foundation
49. Global Doctors for Choice
50. Global Health Council
51. Global Initiatives for Human Rights (GIHR)
52. Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law

53. Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Churches
54. Global Progressive Hub
55. Gynuity Health Projects
56. Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
57. Health GAP
58. Healthy Teen Network
59. HIV Medicine Association
60. Human Rights Campaign
61. Human Rights Watch
62. Ibis Reproductive Health
63. If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
64. In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
65. Ipas
66. Institute for Science and Human Values
67. International Center for Research on Women
68. International Medical Corps
69. International Planned Parenthood Federation
70. International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region
71. International Women's Convocation
72. International Women's Health Coalition
73. IntraHealth International
74. John Snow, Inc.
75. JWI
76. Lutheran Women's Caucus
77. LWC Policy Consulting Inc.
78. MADRE: Demanding Rights, Resources & Results for Women Worldwide
79. Management Sciences for Health
80. Marie Stopes International-US
81. Medical Students for Choice
82. Methodist Federation for Social Action
83. Muslims for Progressive Values
84. NARAL Pro-Choice America
85. National Abortion Federation
86. National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
87. National Center for Lesbian Rights
88. National Center for Transgender Equality
89. National Council of Jewish Women
90. National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
91. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
92. National LGBTQ Task Force
93. National Network of Abortion Funds
94. National Organization for Women
95. National Partnership for Women & Families
96. National Women's Health Network
97. National Women's Law Center
98. Norwegian Refugee Council USA
99. Outright Action International
100. PAI
101. Partners for Development
102. PATH
103. Pathfinder International
104. People For The American Way
105. Physicians for Reproductive Health

106. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
107. Population Connection Action Fund
108. Population Council
109. Population Institute
110. Population Media Center
111. Population Reference Bureau
112. Positive Women's Network - USA
113. PSI
114. Public Health Institute
115. Refugees International
116. Religious Institute
117. Reproaction
118. Reproductive Health Technologies Project
119. Republican Majority for Choice
120. Save the Children
121. Secular Coalition for America
122. Secular Student Alliance
123. Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
124. Sierra Club
125. SisterLove, Inc.
126. SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
127. Society for Humanistic Judaism
128. Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
129. Student Global AIDS Campaign
130. The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF)
131. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
132. Treatment Action Group
133. UltraViolet
134. Union for Reform Judaism
135. Unitarian Universalist Association
136. Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
137. United Methodist General Board of Church & Society
138. URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
139. UU Humanist Association
140. Voices for Progress
141. WaterAid
142. White Ribbon Alliance
143. WIN (Women's Information Network)
144. Women at the Center
145. Women Deliver
146. Women of Reform Judaism
147. Women's Refugee Commission
148. Women's Research & Education Institute
149. Women Thrive Alliance
150. Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network