

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. Concerned Clergy for Choice
37. Consortium of Universities for Global Health
38. Council for Global Equality
39. CREDO
40. Disciple Public Witness; Disciples of Christ
41. Disciples for Choice
42. Disciples Justice Action Network
43. DKT International
44. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
45. EngenderHealth
46. Everywoman Everywhere
47. Feminist Majority
48. First Unitarian Church of Dallas
49. First Unitarian Church of Portland
50. FP2020
51. Freedom From Religion Foundation
52. Global Doctors for Choice
53. Global Health Council
54. Global Initiatives for Human Rights (GIHR)
55. Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law
56. Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Churches

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

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