

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. Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS
35. Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
36. Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
37. Concerned Clergy for Choice
38. Consortium of Universities for Global Health
39. Council for Global Equality
40. CREDO
41. Disciple Public Witness; Disciples of Christ
42. Disciples for Choice
43. Disciples Justice Action Network
44. DKT International
45. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
46. EngenderHealth
47. Everywoman Everywhere
48. Feminist Majority
49. First Unitarian Church of Dallas
50. First Unitarian Church of Portland
51. FP2020
52. Freedom From Religion Foundation
53. Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA)
54. Global Doctors for Choice
55. Global Health Council
56. Global Initiatives for Human Rights (GIHR)

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

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