

## Coalition Statement Opposing the Global Gag Rule

**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, periurban 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.” - Family Health Options Kenya (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. End Rape on Campus
47. EngenderHealth
48. Everywoman Everywhere
49. Feminist Majority
50. First Unitarian Church of Dallas
51. First Unitarian Church of Portland
52. Foreign Policy for America
53. FP2020
54. Freedom From Religion Foundation
55. Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA)
56. Global Doctors for Choice
57. Global Health Council
58. Global Initiatives for Human Rights (GIHR)
59. Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law
60. Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Churches
61. Global Progressive Hub
62. Guttmacher Institute
63. Gynuity Health Projects
64. Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
65. Health GAP
66. Healthy Teen Network
67. HIV Medicine Association
68. Human Rights Campaign
69. Human Rights Watch
70. Ibis Reproductive Health
71. If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
72. In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
73. Ipas
74. Institute for Science and Human Values
75. International Center for Research on Women
76. International Medical Corps
77. International Planned Parenthood Federation
78. International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region
79. International Women's Convocation
80. International Women's Health Coalition
81. International Youth Alliance for Family Planning
82. IntraHealth International
83. John Snow, Inc.
84. JWI
85. Lutheran Women's Caucus
86. LWC Policy Consulting Inc.
87. MADRE: Demanding Rights, Resources & Results for Women Worldwide
88. Management Sciences for Health

89. Marie Stopes International-US
90. Medical Students for Choice
91. Methodist Federation for Social Action
92. Muslims for Progressive Values
93. NARAL Pro-Choice America
94. NASTAD (National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors)
95. National Abortion Federation
96. National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
97. National Center for Lesbian Rights
98. National Center for Transgender Equality
99. National Council of Jewish Women
100. National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
101. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
102. National LGBTQ Task Force
103. National Network of Abortion Funds
104. National Organization for Women
105. National Partnership for Women & Families
106. National Women's Health Network
107. National Women's Law Center
108. New Voices for Reproductive Justice
109. Norwegian Refugee Council USA
110. Outright Action International
111. PAI
112. Partners for Development
113. PATH
114. Pathfinder International
115. People For The American Way
116. Physicians for Reproductive Health
117. Plan International USA
118. Planned Parenthood Clergy Advocacy Board
119. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
120. Population Connection Action Fund
121. Population Council
122. Population Institute
123. Population Media Center
124. Population Reference Bureau
125. Positive Women's Network - USA
126. PSI
127. Public Health Institute
128. Refugees International
129. Religious Institute
130. Reproaction
131. Reproductive Health Technologies Project
132. Save the Children
133. Secular Coalition for America
134. Secular Student Alliance
135. Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
136. Sierra Club

137. SisterLove, Inc.
138. SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
139. Society for Humanistic Judaism
140. Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
141. Student Global AIDS Campaign
142. The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF)
143. The Hunger Project
144. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
145. Transgender Law Center
146. Treatment Action Group
147. UltraViolet
148. Union for Reform Judaism
149. Unitarian Universalist Association
150. Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
151. United Methodist General Board of Church & Society
152. United We Dream
153. URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
154. UU Humanist Association
155. Voices for Progress
156. WaterAid
157. White Ribbon Alliance
158. Whitman Walker Health
159. WIN (Women's Information Network)
160. Women at the Center
161. Women's Law Project
162. Woman Care Global
163. Women Deliver
164. Women of Reform Judaism
165. Women's Refugee Commission
166. Women's Research & Education Institute
167. Woodhull Freedom Foundation
168. Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network
169. YWCA USA