

December 9, 2019

The Honorable Eliot Engel
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Engel,

The undersigned 115 organizations request the House Committee on Foreign Affairs markup H.R. 1055, the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights (HER) Act. The Global HER Act would end the harmful global gag rule, which has been radically expanded under the Trump Administration to apply to all U.S. global health assistance. This legislation, previously known as the Global Democracy Promotion Act, has been introduced and led by House Appropriations Chairwoman Nita Lowey for nearly 20 years, and currently has support from 188 co-sponsors in the House, bipartisan support in the Senate, and is [endorsed](#) by 114 diverse organizations.

The global gag rule limits the ability of foreign nongovernmental organizations to use their own funds to provide, refer, counsel or advocate for abortion in their own country as a condition of receiving U.S. global health funding. The radical and unprecedented expansion of the global gag rule under the current administration has only magnified the negative impact this policy has on the health and lives of communities worldwide, particularly women, girls, and LGBTQI people who are often the most marginalized in their countries. The global gag rule undercuts access to HIV/AIDS services, maternal health care, and contraception, contributing to more unintended pregnancies and more unsafe abortions. Research and data about previous iterations of the policy, as well as the current expanded global gag rule, point to the policy silencing public debate, rolling back progress on health and human rights, and disrupting a range of health services, often to the most vulnerable communities. By undermining the effectiveness of U.S. global health investments, the global gag rule hinders the ability to meet U.S. global health, development, and foreign policy goals.

Permanent repeal of the global gag rule via the Global HER Act would protect foreign nongovernmental organizations from being prohibited from receiving U.S. assistance based on their provision of counseling, referrals or medical services that are legal in the U.S. and the country in which they operate. This legislation would ensure that foreign nongovernmental organizations are treated fairly and afforded the same ability as U.S. organizations to engage in advocacy and lobbying activities with non-U.S. funding. While the House has considered language eliminating the global gag rule in recent appropriations bills, action from the Foreign Affairs Committee on the Global HER Act is imperative to permanently repeal the global gag rule and block any future administration from putting this harmful policy in place.

We thank you for your co-sponsorship and championship of the Global HER Act (H.R. 1055) to date. The pro-reproductive health majority in the House presents an unprecedented opportunity to advance this critical legislation which would promote health, human rights, civil society participation, and effective use of U.S. global health assistance. We look forward to working with you to markup and pass the Global HER Act to end the global gag rule once and for all.

Sincerely,

1. Advocates for Youth
2. Advocating Opportunity
3. African American Ministers In Action
4. American Civil Liberties Union
5. American Humanist Association
6. American Jewish World Service
7. American Medical Student Association
8. American Public Health Association
9. amfAR
10. Amnesty International USA
11. AVAC
12. CARE USA
13. Catholics for Choice
14. Center for Biological Diversity
15. Center for Inquiry
16. Center for International Policy
17. Center for Reproductive Rights
18. CHANGE
19. Consortium of Universities for Global Health
20. Council for Global Equality
21. CREDO
22. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
23. Endocrine Society
24. Equity Forward
25. Feminist Majority Foundation
26. Foreign Policy for America
27. Freedom Network USA
28. Funders Concerned About AIDS
29. Global Fund for Women
30. Global Health Council
31. Global Justice Center
32. Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Church
33. Global Network of Black People working in HIV
34. Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation
35. Guttmacher Institute
36. Health GAP
37. Heartland Alliance International
38. Hispanic Federation
39. HIV Medicine Association
40. Human Rights Campaign
41. Human Rights Watch
42. Ibis Reproductive Health
43. If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
44. In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
45. Infectious Diseases Society of America
46. International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law
47. International Women's Convocation

48. International Women's Health Coalition
49. International Youth Alliance for Family Planning
50. IntraHealth International
51. Ipas
52. Jewish Women International
53. Jewish World Watch
54. John Snow, Inc. (JSI)
55. League of Women Voters of the United States
56. MADRE
57. Marie Stopes International
58. Medical Students for Choice
59. MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health & Rights
60. NARAL Pro-Choice America
61. NASTAD
62. National Abortion Federation
63. National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
64. National Birth Equity Collaborative
65. National Center for Transgender Equality
66. National Council of Jewish Women
67. National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)
68. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
69. National Organization for Women
70. National Partnership for Women & Families
71. National Women's Law Center
72. North American MenEngage Network
73. North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology
74. Not Without Black Women
75. Open Society Policy Center
76. OutRight Action International
77. PAI
78. Pathfinder International
79. People For the American Way
80. Physicians for Reproductive Health
81. Pilgrim United Church of Christ
82. Plan International USA
83. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
84. Population Connection Action Fund
85. Population Institute
86. Population Services International (PSI)
87. Positive Women's Network-USA
88. Religious Institute
89. Safe Horizon
90. Secular Coalition for America
91. SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
92. Sierra Club
93. SisterLove, Inc.
94. Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
95. Synergía - Initiatives for Human Rights

96. The AIDS Institute
97. The Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health
98. The Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS
99. The Hunger Project
100. Treatment Action Group (TAG)
101. Union for Reform Judaism
102. Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
103. United State of Women
104. URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
105. Verity
106. Voices for Progress
107. WaterAid
108. White Ribbon Alliance Global Secretariat
109. Win Without War
110. Women Graduates USA
111. Women of Reform Judaism
112. Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)
113. Women's Refugee Commission
114. Woodhull Freedom Foundation
115. YWCA USA

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Senator Jeanne Shaheen
Representative Nita Lowey