

# SUPPORT THE GLOBAL HER ACT TO REPEAL THE GLOBAL GAG RULE



## THE GLOBAL GAG RULE PRIORITIZES POLITICS OVER THE HEALTH AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

One of the Trump-Pence administration's first actions in office in January 2017 was to impose a vastly expanded [Global Gag Rule](#) (GGR) requiring foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to choose between receiving U.S. global health assistance and providing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care. This policy cuts off funding and supplies to some of the most trusted and experienced health care providers, interferes in health care providers' relationships with their clients and stifles advocacy efforts—endangering the health and lives of women and girls in communities around the world.

Congress can end the Global Gag Rule by passing the Global Health, Empowerment and Rights (Global HER) Act.

### WHAT IS THE GLOBAL GAG RULE?

The expanded Global Gag Rule is an executive branch policy that bans any foreign NGO from receiving U.S. global health funding if the NGO performs, counsels or refers patients on abortion care, or if it advocates for the liberalization of local abortion laws using private, non-U.S. funds.

### TRUMP'S GLOBAL GAG RULE DRAMATICALLY EXPANDS HARMFUL HEALTH IMPACTS

First instituted by President Reagan in 1984, the policy has since been imposed under every Republican administration and rescinded under each Democratic administration. However, President Trump dramatically expanded the scope of the GGR, which previously only applied to family planning and reproductive health assistance, to all global health assistance. Foreign NGOs working on U.S.-funded programs to address issues including maternal and child health, nutrition, HIV, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, as well as family planning, are now forced to comply with the policy if they want to remain eligible to receive U.S. assistance.

The policy has resulted in reduced access to health services—especially for hard-to-reach groups, including rural populations, youth and adolescents as well as LGBTQI individuals. Some communities may be left without any qualified health providers. Furthermore, the GGR has curbed local efforts to liberalize in-country

abortion laws, which are critical to reducing unsafe abortion and decreasing maternal mortality.

The policy also creates a chilling effect where organizations, out of an over-abundance of caution, self-censor or discontinue services allowable under the policy, such as post-abortion care, further harming communities in need of services.

## THE GLOBAL GAG RULE UNDERMINES U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH INVESTMENTS AND GOALS

The U.S. has long invested in global health programs as part of efforts to end preventable maternal and child mortality and fight HIV/AIDS. However, the GGR actively undermines these investments and goals by disqualifying highly effective organizations from receiving funding because they won't comply with a U.S. political agenda, and by saddling all NGOs receiving U.S. global health assistance with increased administrative burdens around monitoring and compliance.

## COSPONSOR THE GLOBAL HEALTH EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS ACT

We encourage you to stand up for the health and rights of women, girls and their communities by cosponsoring the Global HER Act to permanently repeal this harmful policy.

This bill would amend the Foreign Assistance Act, the permanent authorizing statute, to:

1. Ensure foreign NGOs can remain eligible to receive U.S. global health assistance if they provide legally permissible abortion services, counseling or referrals for abortion with non-U.S. funds.
2. Ensure that foreign NGOs can use non-U.S. funds for advocacy and lobbying efforts (consistent with the laws that govern U.S. NGOs receiving foreign assistance) to liberalize abortion laws in the areas where they work.
3. Guarantee that foreign NGOs and their staff, including health care providers, participating in U.S.-supported programs can maintain their right to free speech without U.S. interference.

**To be added as a cosponsor of the Global Health, Empowerment and Rights (Global HER) Act, please reach out to staff in the offices of Representative Nita Lowey or Senator Jeanne Shaheen.**