

## An Open Letter to the President

Dear President Obama,

The undersigned organizations working to promote women's sexual and reproductive health and rights write to express deep gratitude for your repeal of the Global Gag Rule. We thank you for ending this restrictive policy, which has contributed to the deaths and injuries of countless women and girls and undermined the democratic participation of non-governmental organizations in many countries. From our daily work with those most affected, we know that your action will have profound positive effects on the lives of millions of people. We are hopeful that it heralds a new era of U.S. partnership in global cooperation to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and the advancement of women's sexual and reproductive rights worldwide.

Historically, the United States has played a pivotal role in improving the sexual and reproductive health of vulnerable women in the developing world, including as a leading funder of international family planning, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health programs. In earlier years, policy leadership from the United States was critical in achieving landmark agreements at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. At both conferences, U.S. delegations led efforts to forge global consensus on strategies to assure individuals' and couples' rights to attain the highest standard of reproductive and sexual health and to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, free of discrimination, coercion and violence, including through access to safe abortion, where legal. After eight years of U.S. policies that undermined these and other commitments by the United States and many other countries, we are now at a moment to move forward once again.

The need for action is greater than ever. Worldwide, poor reproductive health remains the leading cause of death for women, particularly in the most impoverished countries. More than half a million women die from pregnancy or childbirth complications each year. At least 200 million women lack access to family planning and contraceptive information and services, contributing to more than 40 million pregnancies that are terminated every year, half of them unsafely. Complications from unsafe abortion result in approximately 67,000 deaths and at least 5 million serious injuries annually, all of which are preventable. New cases of HIV continue to outpace the number of people placed on treatment, with insufficient attention to preventive measures, including greater access to basic sexual and reproductive health information and services, especially for young people.

Sound public health investments by the United States and other governments in sexual and reproductive health and rights can help women exert more control over their own lives and overcome these and other health challenges, which are likely to grow more acute in the midst of an unprecedented global economic crisis. We hope that your Administration will honor America's human rights obligations and strongly support the achievement of our global health commitments, including the Millennium Development Goal to halve maternal mortality by 2015, which includes a target for achieving universal access to reproductive health care. We specifically call on you to:

- significantly increase U.S. funding for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, including family planning and maternal health
- support integration of HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health programs and removal of the anti-prostitution pledge in PEPFAR
- support removal of remaining legal and policy restrictions on U.S. funding for safe, voluntary, legal abortion information and services, including the Helms Amendment
- restore funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and
- ensure that officials from your Administration act as a strong voice for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United Nations and other international arenas and do all in their power to translate international agreements into actions that improve women's lives.

Your administration holds great promise for the health and lives of women and for the future of families and communities everywhere. We thank you again for removing the Global Gag Rule and stand ready to support and assist you in achieving our common goal of ensuring that all women can enjoy the sexual and reproductive rights they need to live happy, healthy, productive lives.

Sincerely,

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Center for Reproductive Rights  
Family Care International  
International Planned Parenthood Federation  
International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region  
Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada/Coalition pour le droit à l'avortement au Canada, Canada  
Асоцијација за здравствена едукација и истражување (ХЕРА)/Health Education and Research Association (HERA), Macedonia  
Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD)/Action Canada pour la population et le développement, Canada  
Action Research and Training for Health, India  
Advocates for Youth, USA

African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Africa region  
Aim for Human Rights, The Netherlands  
American Civil Liberties Union, USA  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, USA  
Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Asia  
Asociación Argentina de Sexología y Educación Sexual (Filial Tucuman) (AASES)/Argentinian Association of Sexology and Sexual Education (Tucuman Group), Argentina  
Associação para o Planeamento da Família (APF)/Portuguese Family Planning Association, Portugal

Association Guinéenne bien être Familial (AGBEF)/Planned Parenthood Association of Guinea, Africa  
Associazione italiana donne per lo sviluppo (AIDOS)/Italian Association for Women in Development, Italy  
ASTRA- Central and Eastern European Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Central and Eastern Europe  
ATHENA Network, Global  
Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC/ Development Promotion and Youth, México  
Bangladesh Adolescent Girls Rights Forum (BKAF), Bangladesh  
Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition, Bangladesh  
BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria

Bill and Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA  
Black Women's Health Imperative, USA  
CASA Netherlands, Netherlands  
Catholics for Choice, USA  
Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, AC/Catholics for the Right to Decide, México  
Center for Creative Education, USA  
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE), USA  
Center for Inquiry, USA  
Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Nepal  
Center for Women Policy Studies, USA  
Center for Women's Global Leadership, USA  
Centro de Investigación Epidemiológica en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva/Epidemiological Research Center in Sexual and Reproductive Health, Guatemala  
Centro las Libres de Información en Salud Sexual Región Centro/ "Las Libres" Center for Information in Sexual Health, Mexico  
Colectiva por el Derecho a Decidir/Collective for the Right to Decide, Costa Rica  
Colectivo El Torito AC/Little Bull Collective Civil Association, México  
Comité de Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos de la Federación Latinoamericana de Sociedades de Obstetricia y Ginecología Sexual and Reproductive Rights/Sexual and Reproductive Rights Committee of the Latin American Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecology Societies (FLASOG), Latin America  
Commission on Citizenship and Reproduction, Brazil  
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), USA  
Consortio Latinoamericana contra el Aborto Inseguro (CLACAI)/Latin American Consortium Against Unsafe Abortion, Latin America  
Consortio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad/Consortium for Parliamentary Dialogue and Equality, Mexico  
Cotidiano Mujer, Uruguay  
El Area Salud, Economía y Sociedad del CEDES/Health, Economy and Society Department of CEDES, Argentina  
El Centro de la Mujer Peruana "Flora Tristán"/The Center for Peruvian Women "Flora Tristán", Perú  
El Closet de Sor Juana/Sister Juana's Closet, Mexico  
Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia/Gender Equity: Citizenship, Work and Family, Mexico  
Equilibres & Populations, France  
Espacio Espiral, Promoción Cultural Desarrollo Sustentable y Equidad/Espacio Espiral, Cultural Promotion, Sustainable Development and Equity, Mexico  
European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, Belgium  
Falia Editions Enfance, Senegal  
Federación Argentina de Medicina General, Argentina  
Federation for Women and Family Planning, Poland  
Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecological Societies of India (FOGSI), India  
Feminist Majority, USA  
Femmes-Santé-Développement (FESADE)/Women-Health-Development, France  
Foundation PH Suisse/Partnerships in Health, Switzerland  
Fundación Arcoiris/Rainbow Foundation, Mexico  
Fundación ESAR, Colombia  
Fundación Huésped, Argentina  
Fundación Oriéntame, Colombia  
Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM)/ Foundation for Studies and Research on Women, Argentina  
Girls' Power Initiative, Nigeria  
Global AIDS Alliance, Global  
Global Doctors for Choice, Global  
Groupe de Recherche sur les Femmes et les Lois au Senegal/Research Group on Women and Law in Senegal, Senegal  
Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE)/Information Group on Reproductive Choice, Latin America  
Grupo de Interés Español en Población, Desarrollo y Salud Reproductiva/Spanish Interest Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, Spain  
Healthy Teen Network, USA  
Human Rights Watch, Global  
Ibis Reproductive Health, Global  
INCREASE, Nigeria  
Iniciativas Sanitarias de Uruguay, Uruguay

Initiatives for Sustainable Human Empowerment, Ghana  
Institute for Reproductive and Family Health, Vietnam  
International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), Namibia  
International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), UK  
International Consortium for Medical Abortion, Global  
International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional Office (IPPF-ARO), Africa  
International Planned Parenthood Federation South Asia Regional Office (IPPF-SARO), South Asia  
International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF-EN), Europe  
International Women's Health Coalition, USA  
Investigación en Salud y Demografía (INSAD)/ Research in Health and Demography, México  
Irish Family Planning Association, Ireland  
Jamaica Family Planning Association, Jamaica  
Jovenes por la Elección y el Placer/Youth for Choice and Pleasure (JEYP), Argentina  
Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Kenya  
Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (K-MET), Kenya  
Law Students for Reproductive Justice, USA  
Marie Stopes International, Global  
Mujer y Salud en Uruguay (MYSU)/ Women and Health in Uruguay, Uruguay  
Namibia Planned Parenthood Association  
National Abortion Federation, USA and Canada  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, USA  
National Council of Jewish Women, USA  
National Council of Women's Organizations, USA  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, USA  
National Network of Abortion Funds, USA  
National Women's Health Network  
Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center, USA  
Network for Justice and Democracy, Nigeria  
Network of East-West Women (NEWW), Poland  
Network of Zimbabwean Positive Women (NZPW+), Zimbabwe  
Norsk forening for seksuell og reprodutiv helse og rettigheter (NSRR)/Norwegian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights  
Northwest Women's Law Center, USA  
Our Bodies Ourselves, USA  
Partnership for Development Center, Moldova  
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health (PRCH), USA  
PLANeS Schweizerische Stiftung für sexuelle und reproduktive Gesundheit/ Swiss Foundation for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Switzerland  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America, USA  
Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, USA  
Population Action International, USA  
Population and Sustainability Network, UK  
Population Council Mexico, Mexico  
Programme on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, University of the Free State, South Africa  
Promoting Human Rights and Education in Bangladesh (PHREB), Bangladesh  
PROMSEX, Peru  
PSI, USA  
PSI-Europe, Netherlands  
Red por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos en México (DDESER)/ Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Mexico, Mexico  
Red Uruguaya de Autonomías (RUDA), Uruguay  
Reproductive Health Access Project, USA  
Reproductive Health Matters, UK  
Reproductive Health Training Center, Moldova  
Rutgers Nisso Groep, The Netherlands  
School of Public Health, Maseno University, Kenya  
Secular Coalition for America, USA  
Seimos planavimio ir seksualines sveikatos asociacija/Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Lithuania  
Senosa - Flemish Centre of Expertise on Sexual Health and HIV, Belgium  
Sex & Samfund, The Danish Family Planning Association, Denmark  
SEXADO, Argentina  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), USA  
Sierra Club, USA  
Social Sectors Development Strategies (SSDS), USA  
Sociedad Científica de Sexología y Educación Sexual de Colegio Médico/Scientific Society of Sexology and Education of Medical Society, Argentina

Society for Health Promotion Links, Bangladesh  
Southwest Women's Law Center, USA  
Southwest Women's Law Center, USA  
Stichting Marieke Bevelanderhuis/Foundation Marieke Bevelanderhuis, The Netherlands  
Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), Sweden  
The Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program (CLPP), USA  
The Family Life Association of Swaziland, Swaziland  
Traction Action Fund, USA  
Traction, USA  
Union de L' Action Feminine/The Union for Women's Action, Morocco  
Union for Reform Judaism, USA  
Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland, Finland  
Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA)  
Moçambique, Mozambique  
Women Thrive Worldwide, USA  
Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE), Ghana  
Women's Health Research Unit, School of Public Health & Family Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa  
World Population Foundation, Global  
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Global