

**We come together as international civil society organizations spanning a range of sectors and geographies to oppose the global gag rule (also known as the Mexico City Policy) and call for a permanent end to this harmful policy.** This policy prohibits U.S. assistance for critical global challenges to certain organizations if they provide, counsel, refer, or advocate for legal abortion services in their own country, even if these activities are protected by local law, despite being supported solely with non-U.S. funds. Since 1984, the policy has come and gone with changes in the U.S. presidency, leaving the health and lives of millions of people vulnerable to political whims.

As a result of this policy, lifesaving health services have been dismantled in communities around the world, many of which already face systematic barriers to care. Clinics have been forced to close, outreach efforts to underserved populations have been eliminated, and people have lost access to contraception and many other essential health services, resulting in more unintended pregnancies, more unsafe abortions, and more deaths. Implementing organizations who comply with the global gag rule face costly, risky, intensive administrative burdens that limit efficient program implementation and partner cooperation.

When in effect, the global gag rule restricts the medical information that health care providers can offer, limits free speech, and stifles local advocacy efforts by prohibiting people from participating in public policy debates. Numerous research studies over the course of decades and the direct experiences of organizations working in diverse settings demonstrate that the global gag rule impedes access to a range of health services – including reproductive, maternal and child health care, HIV prevention and treatment, tuberculosis, malaria and even some nutrition programs – by cutting off funding for experienced providers.

Even when the global gag rule is rescinded, the policy's chilling effect persists due to fear that it will be reinstated by a future U.S. president. Even when presidents lift the global gag rule immediately upon taking office, high-quality health partners face long delays in resuming participation in U.S. global health programs. Permanent repeal of the policy is urgently needed to promote sustainable progress in global health and to build and maintain long-term partnerships between the U.S. government, local organizations, and the communities that they serve. We must end this destructive cycle of widespread fear and confusion that disrupts local advocacy efforts and long-standing partnerships, and undercuts the vital work of organizations on the ground. Ending the global gag rule for good would lift the threat of reinstatement and allow U.S.-funded programs to reach their full potential, thus ensuring that the needs and rights of people around the world are fulfilled.

**We are in solidarity with those opposing the global gag rule and those harmed by it. Together, we call for urgent action to end this policy once and for all and to advance health, human rights, and gender equality across the globe.**