

# GLOBAL GAG RULE



## THE ISSUE:

The U.S. Global Gag Rule (also known as the Mexico City policy) threatens the rights of millions around the world by cutting off U.S. foreign assistance to organizations, clinics, and hospitals because of their policies or practices on abortion. While no U.S. funding ever goes to abortion or abortion services because of current U.S. law, the Global Gag rule means that organizations that receive U.S. international aid for other reasons can't so much as educate their communities on safe abortion, no matter what the laws of that country are, or they will lose all U.S. funding.

The Global Gag Rule was first adopted in 1984 by President Reagan but has since been removed and reinstated several times. President Trump not only reinstated the Global Gag but expanded its reach, applying it to all U.S. foreign assistance, a major expansion with huge implications for the lives of millions of people whose access to health, including HIV and AIDS prevention, maternity care, or basic healthcare, depends on U.S. foreign aid.

Under the Global Gag Rule, foreign NGOs are forced to choose between two options: (1) accept U.S. funds and be prohibited from providing abortion counseling, referrals, or services, as well as advocacy around abortion, outside of the three exceptions; or (2) refuse U.S. funds and attempt to secure alternate sources of funding in order to continue providing comprehensive health services to clients and advocating for law reforms to reduce unsafe abortion.

The consequences of Global Gag are severe:

- Limited funding for international health programs, such as HIV prevention, maternal and child health, malaria, family planning, and Zika prevention;
- Women and girls lose access to contraception;
- Increase—not decrease—in abortion rates;
- Health clinics close;
- Women and girls are prevented from accessing safe abortion consistent with laws in their countries; and
- Rural communities have decreased access to healthcare.

The Global Gag rule is deadly and violates the basic rights of millions of people globally to health, information, free speech, and even life. The expanded reach of this policy will have devastating consequences on millions. We must permanently end the Global Gag rule and ensure all people—especially women and girls—have access to the healthcare they need.

## TALKING POINTS:

The Global Gag Rule hampers effective U.S. aid and violates the basic rights of millions of people globally to health, information, free speech, and even life. U.S. aid should do the best good, not endanger women's lives. Trump's Global Gag has put the lives of millions at risk; it's time to end this backwards policy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Immediately and fully repeal the Global Gag Rule.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Amnesty International, "Global Gag Rule," [https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/GLOBAL-GAG\\_v2.pdf](https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/GLOBAL-GAG_v2.pdf)
- International Women's Health Coalition, "Crisis in Care: Year Two Impact of Trump's Global Gag Rule," <https://iwhc.org/resources/crisis-care-year-two-impact-trumps-global-gag-rule/>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Tarah Demant  
Director, Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Program  
(202) 509-8180  
TDemant@aiusa.org