

January 23, 2009

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

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 other sexual 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 the 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.

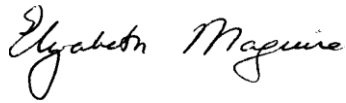
The need for action is greater than ever. Worldwide, poor reproductive health remains the leading cause of death and illness for women of reproductive age, particularly in the most impoverished countries. More than half a million women die from pregnancy or childbirth complications each year. At least 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:

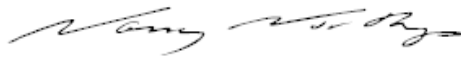
- significantly increase U.S. funding for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, including family planning and maternal health
- support integration of HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health programs and removal of the anti-prostitution pledge in PEPFAR
- support removal of remaining 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,



Elizabeth Maguire, President
Ipas



Nancy Northup, President
Center for Reproductive Rights



Ann Starrs, President
Family Care International



Dr. Gill Greer, Director-General
**International Planned Parenthood
Federation**



Dr. Carmen Barroso, Regional Director
**International Planned Parenthood
Federation Western Hemisphere Region**

cc: Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

Joined by:

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
Aim for Human Rights, The Netherlands
Alternative Espaces Citoyens, France
Amanitare, Africa
American Civil Liberties Union, USA
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, USA
American Jewish World Service, USA
American Medical Student Association, USA
American Women's Fund, USA
Amnesty International, Global
El Area Salud, Economía y Sociedad del CEDES/Health, Economy and Society Department of CEDES, Argentina
Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Asia
Asociación Apoyo a la Nueva Familia (ANFAM), Nicaragua
Asociación Argentina de Sexología y Educación Sexual (Filial Tucuman) (AASES)/Argentinian Association of Sexology and Sexual Education (Tucuman Group), Argentina
Asociación de Mujeres por el Desarrollo Profesional (AMPDI), Nicaragua
Asociación de Mujeres Positivas de Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Associação para o Planeamento da Família (APF)/Portuguese Family Planning Association, Portugal
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Global
Association Guinéenne bien etre Familial (AGBEF)/Planned Parenthood Association of Guinea, Guinea
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, USA
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
Autonomni zenski centar/Autonomous Women's Center (AWC), Serbia
Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC/ Development Promotion and Youth, México
Balochistan Foundation for Development, Pakistan
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
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Canada
CASA Netherlands, The Netherlands
Catholics for Choice, USA
Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (CDD)/Catholics for the Right to Decide, Nicaragua
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 Transnational, USA
Center for Inquiry, USA
Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Nepal
Centre for Social and Technological Change (CSTC), India
Center for Women Policy Studies, USA
Center for Women's Global Leadership, USA
Centro de Estudios y Promoción de la Salud (CEPS), Nicaragua
Centro de Investigación Epidemiológica en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva/Epidemiological Research
El Centro de la Mujer Peruana "Flora Tristan"/The Center for Peruvian Women "Flora Tristán", Perú
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
Children and Youth in Broadcasting (CYIB), Ghana
Choice USA, USA
The Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program (CLPP), Hampshire College, USA
El Closet de Sor Juana/Sister Juana's Closet, Mexico
Colectiva de Mujeres de Masaya, Nicaragua
Colectiva por el Derecho a Decidir/Collective for the Right to Decide, Costa Rica
Colectivo de Mujeres 8 de Marzo, Nicaragua
Colectivo El Torito AC/Little Bull Collective Civil Association, México
Colectivo Feminista Mujeres Universitarias (COFEMUN)/ Feminist Collective of University Women,
Honduras
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 of Obstetrics and Gynecology Societies (FLASOG), Latin America
Commission on Citizenship and Reproduction (CCR), 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
Convergencia de Mujeres, Honduras
Cotidiano Mujer, Uruguay
Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung/German Foundation for World Population (DSW), Germany
Development Connections, USA

Equalinrights, The Netherlands
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
Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia, Ethiopia
Family Health International, Pakistan
The Family Life Association of Swaziland, Swaziland
Family Planning & Welfare Northern Territory, Australia
Family Planning New South Wales, Australia
Family Planning Queensland, Australia
Family Planning Tasmania, Australia
Family Planning Victoria, Australia
Family Planning Western Australia Sexual Health Services, Australia
Faranani-Health Solutions, South Africa
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
Filia die Frauenstiftung/Filia Women's Foundation, Germany
Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres, Nicaragua
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
Fundación Papol Na, Nicaragua
Fundación Puntos de Encuentro, Nicaragua
Gender-Centru/Gender-Center, Republic of Moldova
Girls' Power Initiative, Nigeria
Global AIDS Alliance, Global
Global Doctors for Choice, Global
Golden Mothers Vision International, Ghana
Groupe de Recherche sur les Femmes et les Lois au Senegal/Research Group on Women and Law in Senegal, Senegal
Grupo AXAYACATL, Nicaragua

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

Grupo Feminista de León, Nicaragua

Health Psychology Research Center, Bulgaria

Healthy Teen Network, USA

HIV-säätiö / Aids-tukikeskus/HIV-foundation / the Finnish AIDS Council, Finland

Human Rights Watch, Global

Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (Hivos), The Netherlands

Ibis Reproductive Health, Global

Indus Resource Centre (IRC), Pakistan

Iniciativas Sanitarias de Uruguay, Uruguay

Initiatives for Sustainable Human Empowerment, Ghana

Institute for Reproductive and Family Health, Vietnam

Instituto Mulher e Atenção Integral à Saude (IMAIS), Brazil

International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research (ICDDR), Bangladesh

International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (INCREASE), Nigeria

International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), Namibia

International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), Global

International Consortium for Medical Abortion, Global

International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional Office (IPPF-ARO), Africa region

International Planned Parenthood Federation Arab World Region (IPPF-AWR), Arab region

International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF-EN), Europe region

International Planned Parenthood Federation South Asia Regional Office (IPPF-SARO), South Asia region

International Women's Health Coalition, USA

Investigación en Salud y Demografía (INSAD)/ Research in Health and Demography, México

Irish Family Planning Association, Ireland

Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), Uganda

Jamaica Family Planning Association, Jamaica

Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action, Honduras

Jóvenes Feministas Universitarias, Honduras

Jovenes por la Elección y el Placer/Youth for Choice and Pleasure (JEYP), Argentina

Κυπριακός Σύνδεσμος Οικογενειακού Προγραμματισμού /Cyprus Family Planning Association, Cyprus

Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Kenya

Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (K-MET), Kenya

Law Students for Reproductive Justice, USA

MADRE, Global

Marie Stopes International, Global

Marie Stopes Society, Pakistan

Masimanyane Women's Support Centre, South Africa

Medical Students for Choice (MSFC), USA
Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial/French Family Planning Movement, France
Movimiento Comunal Nicaraguense, Nicaragua
Movimiento Contra el Abuso Sexual, Nicaragua
Movimiento por el Rescate del Sandinismo, Nicaragua
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, USA
Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center, USA
Network for Justice and Democracy, Nigeria
Network of Zimbabwean Positive Women (NZPW+), Zimbabwe
Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, Nigeria
Norsk forening for seksuell og reprodktiv helse og rettigheter (NSRR)/Norwegian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Norway
Northwest Women's Law Center, USA
Nursing Students for Choice, USA
Open Society Policy Center, USA
Organization for Community Development, Pakistan
Our Bodies Ourselves, USA
OUT LGBT Wellbeing, South Africa
Partnership for Development Center, Moldova
Pathfinder International, Global
Philippine NGO Support Program, Inc. (PHANSuP), The Philippines
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 Association of Ghana (PPAG), Ghana
Planned Parenthood Federation of America, USA
Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, USA
Population Action International, USA
Population and Sustainability Network, UK
Population Connection, USA
Population Council Mexico, Mexico
Pro-Choice Public Education Project, USA
El Programa Feminista Centroamericano La Corriente, Nicaragua
Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género de la UNAM (PUEG-UNAM)/University Program in Gender Studies at the National University of Mexico, Mexico

Programme on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, University of the Free State, South Africa
Progressive Women's Movement, Ghana
Promoting Human Rights and Education in Bangladesh (PHREB), Bangladesh
PROMSEX, Peru
PSI, USA
PSI-Europe, The Netherlands
Puntos de Encuentro, Nicaragua
Qadin ve Muasir Dunya Merkezi/Center "Women and Modern World," Azerbaijan
Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, Honduras
Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y la Diáspora, Latin America
Red Lésbica Cattrachas, Honduras
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
REDLAC, Honduras
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, USA
Reproductive Health Access Project, USA
Reproductive Health Matters, UK
Reproductive Health Training Center, Moldova
Rutgers Nisso Groep, The Netherlands
The Ryan Residency Training Program in Abortion and Family Planning and the Fellowship in Family Planning, USA
Safe Motherhood Network Federation, Nepal
Save our Women International, Ghana
School of Public Health, Maseno University, Kenya
Secular Coalition for America, USA
Seimos planavimo ir seksualines sveikatos asociacija/Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Lithuania
Sensoa - Flemish Centre of Expertise on Sexual Health and HIV, Belgium
Sex & Samfund, The Danish Family Planning Association, Denmark
SEXADO, Argentina
Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia (SH&FPA), Australia
Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT) in the Australian Capital Territory, Australia
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), USA
Sierra Club, USA
Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia
The Social Research Center of the American University in Cairo, Egypt
Social Sectors Development Strategies (SSDS), USA
Sociedad Científica de Sexología y Educación Sexual de Colegio Medico/Scientific Society of Sexology and Education of Medical Society, Argentina
Sociedad Paraguaya de Estudios sobre Sexualidad Humana (SPESH)/Paraguayan Society of Human Sexuality Studies, Paraguay
Sociedad Nicaraguense de Ginecología y Obstetricia, Nicaragua

Sociedad Nicaraguense de Médicos Generales, Nicaragua
Society for Health Promotion Links, Bangladesh
Southwest Women's Law Center, USA
Stichting Marieke Bevelanderhuis/Foundation Marieke Bevelanderhuis, The Netherlands
Stowarzyszenie Wspolpracy Kobiet/Network of East-West Women (NEWW), Poland
Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), Sweden
Tibetan Nuns Project, India
Traction Action Fund, USA
Traction, USA
Treatment Monitor, Health Systems Trust, South Africa
Umuada Igbo Nigeria/Daughters of Igbo land, Nigeria
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 and Law in Southern Africa, Research and Educational Trust Malawi (WLSA), Malawi
Women of Color United (WOCU), USA
Women on Waves, The Netherlands
Women on Web, International
Women Thrive Worldwide, USA
Women's Economic Agenda Project, USA
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Global
Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE), Ghana
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, Global
Women's Health Research Unit, School of Public Health & Family Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa
The Women's Organization Networking for Human Rights Advocacy (WONETHA), Uganda
The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), Global
World Population Foundation, Global
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Global