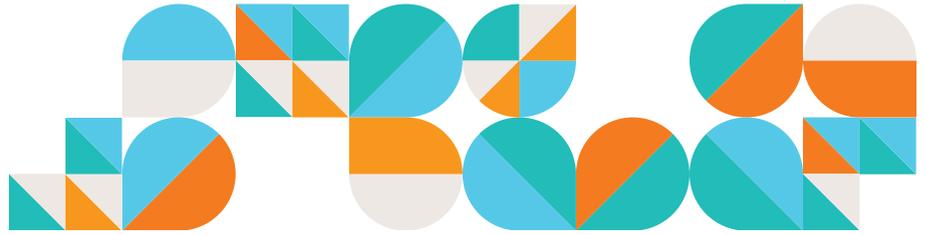




THE HELMS AMENDMENT



When talking about the Helms Amendment and U.S. foreign assistance for safe abortion, these messages are simple and represent what voters feel:

Women in developing countries deserve the safety and dignity of basic health care that includes comprehensive reproductive health care. No matter where they live, women should have access to preventative screenings, testing and care, including access to safe abortion and contraception.

Lack of clarity around U.S. policy in effect bars health professionals from providing available services and prevents women and girls from receiving basic health information. Without this information, they are not able to make informed decisions about reproductive services and abortion that are right for their individual circumstances and best meet their needs.

Restricting the use of U.S. funds for abortion under any circumstances hurts millions of women and their families and puts politics over lives. The United States plays an important role in making the world a better place by addressing poverty, disease and injustice.

If we put access to safe abortion out of reach, millions of women will turn to abortion methods that aren't safe. Each year, tens of thousands of women die from unsafe abortions and millions more suffer serious injuries and complications that can have life-long consequences.

Access to safe abortion and contraception saves lives. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), comprehensive reproductive health programs could help prevent around 300,000 maternal deaths a year.

Lack of clarity on the current U.S. policy essentially prevents women and girls from receiving simple and basic health information. Without this information, they are not able to make informed decisions about

reproductive services and abortion that are right for their individual circumstances and best meet their needs.

U.S. policies around the world should reflect our values: respect, freedom and equality. No matter where someone lives, they should have the freedom and opportunity to control their lives at the most basic level—including the decision about whether or when to become a parent.

This is not about money—only about 1% of the United States' entire federal budget is spent on foreign aid and a very small fraction of that goes to health care in developing countries—but the current policy impact is huge, affecting millions of women in the world's poorest countries.

Safe abortion and contraception save lives yet politicians limit access to essential equipment and medicines. The current U.S. policy has contributed to a shortage of equipment and medicines used to treat women who suffer complications during pregnancy or childbirth.

Across the political spectrum, Americans believe that women in developing countries should have access to all types of reproductive health care, including abortion.

It is long past time for the U.S. to support safe abortion services and to repeal the Helms amendment. U.S. restrictions must not stand in the way of access to legal health care. By a 21-point margin, voters favor overturning the Helms Amendment and elected leaders who support overturning the Helms Amendment receive a favorability boost among voters.

MESSAGES TO AVOID:



❌ DON'T SAY:

Helms is the law of the land.

❌ DON'T SAY:

There is no taxpayer funding of abortion overseas.

✅ RATHER, SAY:

Current law restricts organizations from using U.S. foreign assistance funds to help women access abortion care.

✅ RATHER, SAY:

U.S. law currently puts women in danger by restricting the use of federal dollars from helping women in other countries access abortion care.

FAQS AND ANSWERS:

“This is a policy that has been in place for more than 45 years. Why get rid of it?”

For more than four decades, the policy has curtailed crucial reproductive health care for women. It has reduced access to a full range of reproductive health care, including abortion, and has limited life-saving equipment and supplies. What that means is that women, their families and their communities have suffered—when U.S. foreign assistance is supposed to help. In the last 45 years, many countries in the developing world have made abortion legal, in some or all cases, as part of their effort to reduce maternal mortality and promote human rights. This outdated policy is out of step with current needs and is a barrier to patients receiving the care to which they are legally entitled.

“Are average Americans in favor of the United States funding abortions in developing countries?”

We all recognize the responsibility the United States has in the world. And most of us want to see sustainable long-term growth in developing countries. Access to reproductive health care, including safe abortion, is linked to improvements on other urgent issues like basic public health, hunger and malnutrition, maternal mortality and economic growth.

Recent polling also shows that a majority (76%) of voters believe that ensuring women have access to the full range of reproductive healthcare, including abortion, is an important goal for developing countries and 54% of voters favor overturning the Helms amendment.

TALKING ABOUT HELMS: When talking about the Helms Amendment, make sure to get to these points with the following groups.

LEAD WITH THIS MESSAGE FOR:

Base Democratic groups, including voters of color and young voters (ages 18–34).

If we put access to safe abortion out of reach, millions of women will turn to abortion methods that aren't safe. Each year, tens of thousands of women die from unsafe abortions and millions more suffer serious injuries and complications that can have life-long consequences. **Safe abortion and contraception save lives yet politicians limit access to essential lifesaving equipment and medicines.** The current U.S. policy has contributed to a shortage of equipment and medicines used to treat women who suffer complications during pregnancy or childbirth.

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LEAD WITH THIS MESSAGE FOR:

Persuadable and outreach audiences

Women in developing countries deserve the safety and dignity of basic health care that includes comprehensive reproductive health care. No matter where they live, women should have access to preventative screenings, testing and care, including access to safe abortion and contraception.

LEAD WITH THIS MESSAGE FOR:

Conservatives and Evangelical Christians

Lack of clarity around U.S. policy in effect bars health professionals from providing available services and prevents women and girls from receiving basic health information. Without this information, they are not able to make informed decisions about reproductive services and abortion that are right for their individual circumstances and best meet their needs.