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## **Biden-Harris Administration Demonstrates its Commitment to Sexual and Reproductive Rights**

*U.S. supports recommendations to advance sexual and reproductive health, including lifting funding restrictions on United States foreign assistance*

**WASHINGTON** – Yesterday, the Biden-Harris administration demonstrated its commitment to global human rights by supporting recommendations given in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Fourteen countries provided recommendations to the United States calling for access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including access to abortion services.

“Ipas applauds the administration for taking this strong stance and we look forward to working collectively to implement the recommendations and to ensure that all people, here and abroad, have access to the abortion services that they want and need,” says Ipas Senior Policy Advisor Bethany Van Kampen.

“We are encouraged by the actions of the United States at the UN Human Rights Council this week,” said Katherine Olivera, Assistant Program Officer, U.S. Foreign Policy at the International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC). “The Biden-Harris administration’s support for key policy changes shows a strong commitment to progress on sexual and reproductive health and rights.”

Recommendations referenced key policies that the United States should act on, including repealing the Helms Amendment, a racist policy that denies reproductive health and rights to people around the world by restricting U.S. funding for abortion care. The Netherlands specifically called for this repeal--as did the UK in a [video statement](#)--and for U.S. foreign assistance to be used to the **full extent** of the current policy, at least, until the Helms Amendment is eradicated. Specifically, they called for “United States foreign assistance to be used, at a minimum, for safe abortion in cases of rape, incest and life endangerment.” Other countries, like the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Norway, Canada, New Zealand, Austria and others, called for equitable and universal access to sexual and reproductive health care and an end to restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance.

"IWHC advocated for many of the recommendations that were affirmed by the U.S., specifically that the U.S. should end restrictions on foreign assistance funding and ensure that religious refusal laws do not restrict access to women’s health and rights. We now look forward to seeing action on these issues,” says Olivera.

“We are encouraged by the alignment between the administration and our SRHR champions in Congress, and we look forward to supporting efforts to actualize these critical commitments in the UPR through both administrative and congressional efforts,” says Van Kampen.

Ipas and IWHC urge Congress to pass legislation, including the [Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act](#), led by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and bill co-leads Reps. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Jackie Speier (D-CA), Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Norma Torres (D-CA) and Marilyn Strickland (D-WA). This historic legislation removes the Helms Amendment from statute and replaces it with proactive language stating that U.S. funding *shall* be used to provide comprehensive reproductive health-care services and information, including abortion services, training, and equipment. We also urge President Biden to champion Helms repeal, and to direct the U.S. government to expand U.S. foreign assistance support for abortion care to the maximum extent allowed under the Helms Amendment, including for abortion information, and counseling.

Ipas and IWHC were proud to co-sponsor a [statement submitted](#) by the Center for Reproductive Rights on March 17, to the UN Human Rights Council, which commends the United States for supporting recommendations related to sexual and reproductive rights received in the course of its 3rd Universal Periodic Review, and urging robust implementation of the recommendations.

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