

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Helms Amendment: 47 years of denying U.S. support for international reproductive health and rights

The Biden-Harris administration offers some hope for international reproductive health, rights and justice but unless the Helms Amendment is repealed, people in low-to-middle income countries will continue to be denied access to abortion services.

WASHINGTON – For the past four years, the Trump administration has systematically attempted to roll back sexual and reproductive health and rights globally. Their anti-rights attacks put the United States at odds with the rest of the world and diminish its historical leadership on global health and human rights. Not only must President-Elect Biden adopt a bold agenda to undo the harms inflicted by Trump’s anti-rights policies, but his administration and Congress must proactively repeal all U.S. foreign policies that prohibit access to abortion services. This includes supporting the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*, which repeals the Helms Amendment and was introduced by Rep. Jan Schakowsky this summer.

“Since 1973, the Helms Amendment has prohibited any U.S. foreign aid from being used for ‘the performance of abortion as a method of family planning.’ In practice, Helms has banned all U.S. foreign assistance funds from being used for **any** abortion care. As the largest government funder of global health, including family planning and reproductive health services, the United States should be stepping up and doing everything we can to prevent negative maternal health outcomes. But instead we have archaic language that creates an arbitrary line between abortion and all other health-care services, limiting access to critical care, particularly in the Global South,” **states Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)**. “It is plain wrong for the United States to force a health-care provider in another country to choose between limiting the care they can give to patients and keeping critical funding. Doctors pledge to do no harm.”

The Helms Amendment was signed into law as part of the Foreign Assistance Act on December 17, 1973 after being authored by then Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), a politician well-known for his racist and [discriminatory positions](#). The amendment prohibits the use of any U.S. foreign assistance funds for “abortion as a method of family planning.” In effect, it is implemented as a

ban on funding for abortion and denies millions of mostly Black and brown people in low-to-middle income countries the health care they need and want.

Restricting U.S. foreign aid for abortion is harmful to the health and well-being of people around the world. Barriers to accessing abortion care too often mean that people's only option is to seek an abortion in conditions that are considered unsafe —globally, more than [35 million](#) people have abortions in unsafe conditions each year. As a result, tens of thousands of people die and millions more face dangerous injuries and complications.

In July, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a Senior Chief Deputy Whip and Chair of the Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus Providers and Clinics Task Force, introduced the [Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act](#), with original co-sponsors Reps. Nita Lowey (D-NY), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Jackie Speier (D-CA), Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Diana DeGette (D-CO), and Norma Torres (D-CA). The bill is currently cosponsored by more than 120 representatives in the 116th Congress. This was the first time in 47 years that members of Congress have introduced standalone legislation to repeal the Helms Amendment.

“The Helms Amendment imposes arbitrary and medically unnecessary abortion restrictions on international communities, allowing the United States to control the health care and bodily autonomy of billions of Black and Brown people around the world. When people aren't allowed to make their own reproductive health decisions, and have limited access to vital health care, it has dire consequences for their health. It costs lives. If we are serious about racial and reproductive justice worldwide, then we must repeal the Helms Amendment, and that is exactly what we intend to do,” says Congresswoman Schakowsky.

The Biden/Harris administration can show Americans, and the rest of the world, that they stand for reproductive freedom by supporting the [Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act](#). It's time to end nearly five decades of harm.

Immediately upon taking office, President Biden must issue an executive order stating his administration's commitment to protect sexual and reproductive rights and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion, not only in the United States but globally. The new administration has committed to rescinding the global gag rule (also known as the 'Mexico City policy'), a presidential memorandum that prohibits foreign organizations that receive U.S. global health assistance from using their *own* funds to provide abortion services, information, counseling or referrals and from engaging in advocacy to expand abortion access. But with the Helms Amendment in place, the largest government funder of reproductive health in the world—the U.S. government—continues to neglect, stigmatize and separate abortion care.

A broad coalition of global reproductive health and rights advocacy, research, and service delivery organizations has been working to mitigate and address the harms caused by Helms for years. The Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act is currently endorsed by more than 115 organizations.

More information can be found at repealhelms.org and congress.gov.

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Quotes from Endorsing Organizations

Anu Kumar, president and CEO, Ipas

For far too long, the United States has imposed, through foreign policies, imperialist, neo-Colonialist, racist values. The 1973 Helms Amendment is an example of this, and it must be fully repealed. For 47 years, Helms has stigmatized and politicized abortion services. It removes abortion from comprehensive reproductive health care denying women and girls the full spectrum of care they need.

With 75 million abortions taking place around the world every year and 35 million of them occurring unsafely in resource poor countries, it is Black and brown women who bear the burden of this discriminatory and deeply unjust policy.

The Helms Amendment endangers women's health and exacerbates the stigma around abortion by denying funding for abortion care in all US foreign assistance, even in humanitarian settings. The Helms amendment combined with the GGR causes fear and confusion amongst providers and health system managers who worry that any association with abortion will jeopardize their U.S. funding.

If the Helms Amendment remains in place, the U.S. government will continue to be the only donor nation that neglects, stigmatizes and separates abortion care in its foreign assistance. US support will still be unavailable for abortion services, training and equipment, as well as abortion information or counseling about all legal pregnancy options, even in cases of rape, incest and life endangerment. A policy rooted in racism that has cost the lives of thousands, if not millions, of women will continue to stand even in 2021.

Rori Kramer, director of U.S. advocacy, American Jewish World Service

As we mark the anniversary of the Helms Amendment, we recommit ourselves to ensuring that all individuals are able to access the health care that they want and need.

For too long, the Helms Amendment has restricted the autonomy and dignity of women, girls, gender non-conforming and trans individuals, unjustly putting abortion care out of reach, endangering countless lives across the globe, and undermining U.S. foreign assistance programs.

The Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act – led by Representatives Schakowsky, Lowey, Lee, Speier, Pressley, DeGette, and Torres – ends this decades-long racist policy and would reaffirm human rights for the most vulnerable. We are grateful to stand alongside 107 Members of the House of Representatives in calling for an end to this dangerous restriction and promoting human rights across the globe.

Amanda Ussak, director of International Programs, Catholics for Choice

Catholics for Choice is proud to stand with moral leaders like Rep. Jan Schakowsky to right the wrong of the Helms Amendment, an affront to our values as Americans and as Catholics—freedom of speech, freedom of religion and the Catholic call to care the marginalized of society. For more than four decades, the Helms Amendment has endangered the lives of the most vulnerable people in the world— depriving them of both moral autonomy and basic reproductive health care. It is unconscionable for this

dangerous and unjust policy to continue. Congress should pass the *Abortion is Healthcare Everywhere* Act, now!

Serra Sippel, president, CHANGE (the Center for Health and Gender Equity)

The Helms Amendment is a racist and neocolonial policy, and it is unconscionable that the United States has kept it in place for more than 45 years.

We must remove the abysmal legacy of Jesse Helms and ensure that the U.S. government no longer turns its back on the health and human rights of people across the globe. As countries have lifted their own restrictions on abortion and prioritized the health and rights of women and girls, the Helms Amendment has dragged their progress backwards.

The United States must stop dictating to other countries that they deny women, girls, families, and LGBTQIA+ communities access to life-saving health care. Congress must work to pass the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act* and repeal the Helms amendment now.

Dr. Herminia Palacio, president and CEO, Guttmacher Institute

The U.S. government can and must show global leadership in safeguarding reproductive health and rights. This is true especially with the COVID-19 crisis threatening the health of women and families across the world—including potentially a significant increase in unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortion. U.S. leadership includes repealing the harmful Helms amendment through the *Abortion Is Health Care Everywhere Act*.

The Helms amendment is a deeply unjust and discriminatory policy that in effect prohibits the use of U.S. global health assistance to support for safe abortion services abroad. Like other abortion restrictions, this funding ban most harshly impacts people with the fewest resources, including those who have low incomes, are young, or live in rural areas.

The evidence is clear and irrefutable: Abortion is an experience shared by millions of people worldwide, both in countries where abortion is highly restricted and where it is broadly legal. Our urgent call to action for policymakers is that they must recognize the basic human right of all people to decide freely whether and when to be pregnant.

Dr. Chimaraoke Izugbara, director of global health, youth and development, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

International Center for Research on Women applauds the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*, which calls for the repeal of the Helms Amendment. For over four decades, the Helms Amendment has frustrated access to essential sexual and reproductive health services worldwide. Our research shows that people of all genders who have bodily autonomy are healthier, are more financially secure and are more empowered in their decision-making and participation in social and political life. Particularly for women and girls, these benefits extend to healthier and economically secure families, communities, and societies.

Ilyse Hogue, president, NARAL Pro-Choice America

For 47 years, the Helms Amendment has blocked millions of women and families around the world from accessing abortion care and hindered their ability to access other critical reproductive health care information and services. This amendment disproportionately impacts marginalized communities who already face tremendous hurdles to accessing care.

Now, more than ever, it is critical that Congress pass the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act to repeal the discriminatory Helms Amendment and ensure that women and families everywhere have the ability to make their own decisions about their lives, their bodies, and their futures.

Elisha Dunn-Georgiou, interim co-CEO, PAI

For forty-seven years, the Helms Amendment has perpetuated and exacerbated health inequities around the world and compromised the effectiveness of the U.S.' global health investments.

Along with the global gag rule, funding restrictions that impede access to essential health care—including abortion—and prevent individuals from exercising their rights have no place in U.S. foreign policy.

The repeal of the Helms Amendment is long overdue, and we thank our Congressional leaders for clearing a path toward safe, legal and accessible abortion everywhere.

Brian Dixon, senior vice president for media and government relations, Population Connection Action Fund

For nearly 50 years, the Helms Amendment has made life harder for hundreds of millions of people around the world. It's bad health policy. It's bad foreign policy. It's a disgraceful relic of a right-wing agenda that is utterly divorced from the reality of the lives of the people it hurts, and it is long past time for its repeal. We're proud to endorse this important bill and are excited to help it pass into law.

Alexis McGill Johnson, president and CEO, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Abortion is essential health care — period. Politicians in the United States should not be able to deny anyone's access to health services, domestically or abroad.

The Helms Amendment has always been a coercive policy, pushing the extreme ideology of a vocal minority in the United States on people in many of the lowest income countries in the world — people in need of health care.

The policy is a stark example of neocolonialism, taking advantage of the uneven relationship between the United States and the countries that receive aid. We're calling on Congress and the Biden-Harris administration to prioritize repealing the Helms amendment.

Shilpa Phadke, vice president of the Women's Initiative at the Center for American Progress

We applaud the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act* and its goal to ensure women around the world can better access safe abortion. This bill marks the beginning of a policy reversal that has been long overdue. For decades, women around the world, particularly in the Global South, have been denied

access to the full range of reproductive health care as a result of the Helms Amendment, which has allowed politicians in the United States to place their ideologies about abortion ahead of women's autonomy.

It is high time that we repeal and replace the Helms Amendment and protect women's ability to make decisions that are best for them and their families. If we want to forge the best solutions for promoting health and well-being and expanding peace and security throughout the world, women must help shape our collective future – and that is only possible if we safeguard women's autonomy and freedom.

Dr. Ali Bokhari, president, American Medical Student Association

The American Medical Student Association believes that all women, regardless of age, social status or marital status have the right to obtain a legal, safe, voluntary abortion.

We oppose any policies that implicitly or explicitly prohibit the inclusion of abortion counseling or services in any family planning clinics or counseling services. That is why we support efforts to repeal the Helms Amendment and support the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*.

Salih Booker, president and CEO, Center for International Policy

The Helms Amendment combines the racism and sex-based discrimination that is inherent in United States policy and inflicts the combined harm of both on women of color around the world that are reliant on health services funded by the US through limiting women's access to full reproductive healthcare. The goal of the Helms amendment, much like that of the Hyde amendment, is to advance an agenda that limits personal freedom and control of one's health — especially the freedom and health of women of color. Every woman, regardless of color and country, has the right to freedom of choice and to safe healthcare. Any attempt to undermine that freedom is nothing other than a cruel, racist, and sexist act seeking to continue global domination by a white, Western patriarchy.

Kelley Dennings, campaigner, Center for Biological Diversity

Universal access to abortion as part of reproductive healthcare is a basic human right. All of us should have agency over our bodies and our decisions about whether — and when — to have children.

When safe, legal abortion is restricted, either in the United States or elsewhere in the world, it endangers patients and limits the ability of people to receive comprehensive medical services, make informed healthcare decisions and choose when to start a family.

We denounce all unnecessary, intentionally burdensome regulations placed on abortion providers.

Karla Gonzales Garcia, policy director, COLOR

The Helms Amendment exports political attacks on bodily autonomy and harms women and girls around the world. We will never remain silent when the state or politicians try to control our reproduction, how we build our families or the decisions we make about our bodies and our lives.

Barbara Weinstein, director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Jewish tradition emphasizes the importance of kavod ha'briyot, or respect for individual dignity. The Helms Amendment violates this core value by limiting abortion access for the most vulnerable and perpetuating inequality in global health care. We are proud to endorse the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*, which would remove the Helms Amendment from statute and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health care worldwide.

Cristine Sardina, director, Desiree Alliance

As sex workers, accessing reproductive health without shame, stigma, or legal consequences, makes it harder to control and manage our health care choices. If we literally have to choose between our healthcare or losing our children because of economic and legal ramifications, we have to understand that the moral and carceral systems in which we are forced to abide by, is problematic at its very best.

Kenyora Parham, executive director, End Rape On Campus

End Rape On Campus is proud to endorse the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act* because we believe that access to safe abortion is a fundamental human right for all individuals. Even more specifically, with respect to survivors of sexual violence, research shows that reproductive rights are intrinsically linked to intimate partner violence.

The Helms Amendment is a harmful policy that dismisses survivors' autonomy and increases high mortality rates. We need to #centerthemargins by uplifting and empowering survivors, especially those who are most marginalized in the national discourse--regardless of how they identify across the gender spectrum and promote equality by also upholding their human right to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care access.

Grant Shubin, legal director, Global Justice Center

While less known than the global gag rule, the Helms Amendment is the core of U.S. abortion restrictions abroad. It has been at the center of the United States' denial of essential medical care for over 40 years and its repeal is long overdue.

Thanks to Helms and other U.S. abortion restrictions, the United States is in constant violation of international human rights laws protecting non-discriminatory medical care and freedom of speech and association. Helms must be abolished before it is allowed to inflict any more harm around the world.

Beverly Winikoff, president, Gynuity Health Projects

Access to essential medical care also means access to safe abortion. Repeal of the oppressive Helms Amendment is long overdue. Paul Golin, executive director, Jews for a Secular Democracy Judaism has never considered human life to begin at conception, and neither does science; anti-abortion laws inherently privilege one interpretation of one religion over all other religions and none, and that is by definition a breach of the American values enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Andrea Carlise, executive director, International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law (IANGEL)

IANGEL believes in a world where every person has the right to self-determination and dignity, which

include the rights to reproductive freedom and justice. The health inequities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic are further compounded by the Helms Amendment - which inhumanely bars U.S. foreign assistance funds from being used for abortion services.

The way the Helms Amendment is interpreted and implemented denies reproductive freedom, and censors critical health information. That's why IANGEL supports the Abortion is Healthcare Everywhere Act, historic legislation that will replace the harmful Helms amendment 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.

It is time for the U.S. to take a stand for gender equity and human rights by increasing, rather than preventing, global access to reproductive healthcare.

Bridget Bohannon, interim executive director, Medical Students for Choice

Medical Students for Choice believes that all people should have access to the health services that allow them to lead safe, healthy lives, including all aspects of sexual and reproductive health. All reproductive health choices should be freely accessible to all people.

The Helms amendment is a racist, neo-colonial policy designed to limit reproductive freedom around the world. This unjust policy disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable populations, denying their human rights in accessing health care and deciding if and when to be pregnant. We urge the United States' Congress to pass the *Abortion is Healthcare Everywhere Act*, repealing the damaging Helms amendment.

The Very Reverend Katherine Ragsdale, president and CEO of the National Abortion Federation (NAF)

On this anniversary of the Helms Amendment, we are reminded once again of the harmful and discriminatory nature of the policy. It undermines U.S. foreign assistance programs and targets vulnerable communities that already have difficulty accessing basic health care.

Abortion is essential health care and everyone has the right to make decisions for their own health and well-being. The end of this amendment is long overdue, and it is time that legislators repeal it once and for all. We support the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act* and we will continue to fight for safe and affordable access to abortion around the world.

Jody Rabhan, chief policy officer, National Council of Jewish Women

At the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), we know that abortion is safe, essential, time sensitive health care and that health care is a basic human right. Our Jewish values teach us that every single person's health is unassailable and that all deserve fair treatment and access to the resources necessary to make their own decisions about abortion without political interference or economic coercion. The Helms Amendment has long turned this principle on its head, denying care to millions of individuals around the world and hindering the exercise of their fundamental reproductive rights by blocking use of US foreign assistance funds for abortion services. NCJW is proud to endorse the Abortion

is Health Care Everywhere Act to repeal this dangerous policy and to support access to high-quality, comprehensive reproductive health care services worldwide.

Christian Nunes, president, NOW

NOW is proud to support the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*, which prioritizes the repeal of the Helms Amendment, an oppressive piece of legislation that denies women access to reproductive freedom. While it only bans the use of U.S. aid for abortion care as a method of family planning, every American president since its passing in 1973 has interpreted the ban to also prohibit aid for abortions in the case of rape, incest, and to save a woman's life. Abortion care is health care and reproductive freedom should be available to ALL women – the United States must play its part in increasing access for women around the world.

Nina Besser Doorley, associate director, advocacy and policy, International Women's Health Coalition

The Helms Amendment is a racist relic rooted in extreme anti-abortion politics rather than sound global health policy.

For more than four decades, it has restricted access to legal abortion services, increased stigma, and robbed pregnant people of their right to make decisions about their own health and lives.

Although the United States and global community have made great strides in recognizing and upholding sexual and reproductive rights since 1973, the Helms Amendment continues to inflict harm on and undermine human rights for marginalized communities worldwide.

If the incoming Biden administration wants to reestablish the United States as a leader of global health and human rights, Congress must pass the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act* to eliminate US-sponsored barriers to care and ensure that people worldwide have access to safe and legal abortion services.

Andrea Miller, president, National Institute for Reproductive Health

Every person should have the ability to control their body, life and future -- this is a fundamental human right and key to each person's ability to lead a healthy and autonomous life.

The Helms Amendment codifies a practice that is rooted in systemic racism, misogyny, and imperialism. The US is putting lives around the world at risk by keeping this amendment on the books. Just as we cannot abide attacks on our reproductive freedom and dignity domestically, we should not allow such practices to flourish internationally.

The National Institute for Reproductive Health strongly urges Congress and the Biden-Harris administration to consign the dangerous Helms amendment to the ash heap of history.

Ben Jealous, president, People For the American Way

The United States provides health care aid in parts of the world where international assistance is critically needed. It is essential that this aid go to supporting the full spectrum of safe reproductive

health care, including abortion care.

For nearly five decades, the Helms Amendment has not only hampered our ability to support safe care, it has done harm by allowing unsafe practices to flourish.

Today, on the anniversary of its enactment, we once again call for passage of the Abortion Is Healthcare Everywhere Act. This legislation appropriately puts gender equity, medical science, and human rights at the forefront of our foreign assistance priorities.

Dr. Kristyn Brandi, board chair, Physicians for Reproductive Health

As an ob/gyn who provides abortion care, I see every day how critical it is that people have access to safe, accessible abortion care where they live. While we continue to fight for equitable access to abortion care in the United States, Congress must pass the *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act* to extend the reality of access to safe comprehensive maternal and reproductive health care, including abortion care, around the world.

Fatimah Gifford, Executive Director, Provide

At Provide, we envision health care systems that care for all people with dignity and respect. We support policies that expand abortion access, and are proud to support the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act, which prioritizes the repeal of the Helms Amendment, a harmful and oppressive piece of legislation that hinders access to all folks moving closer to obtaining full reproductive justice.

Rev. Katey Zeh, CEO, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

People across traditions seek abortion care. We must ensure that care is provided without judgment or barriers. The decisions we make about our bodies are profound and the decisions we make about abortion and pregnancy are sacred.

We are honored to be part of the efforts to support the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act, which will bring an end to the unjust Helms Amendment. As leaders of faith we denounce the endless attempts to take away abortion access. This is a direct attack on our religious liberty and individual rights, health and dignity.

Lisa Maldonado, executive director, Reproductive Health Access Project

Reproductive health care is basic health care that should be accessible to everyone safely, easily, affordably, with dignity, and without judgment. We support the *Abortion Is Healthcare Everywhere Act* and affirm our commitment to repealing the harmful Hyde and Helms amendments.

Dazon Dixon Diallo, founder and president, SisterLove

At SisterLove, we recognize and respect the lived experiences of all women, especially Black and Brown women and girls whose sexual and reproductive rights are denied, abused and violated systemically and socially.

Anti-abortion beliefs and anti-abortion laws are two different things. Believe and practice what you will

in your own life. But any law that restricts, limits or prohibits women and people assigned female at birth from exercising their rights to bodily autonomy, integrity and the dignity to decide for themselves is a sexist, racist and imperialist violation of their human rights.

The time for allowing politicians and corporations to decide the reproductive fate of women and their communities has come to an end.

The Helms and Hyde Amendments must die eternal deaths, and with this bill we can mark the beginning of ending them both, and it is my hope and my fight that they will.

Cherisse A. Scott, founder & CEO, SisterReach

Women, girls and people who give birth in Tennessee have been abandoned around their reproductive and sexual health services, education and resources.

Access to safe, legal and affordable reproductive health care, including abortion services, is imperative for people who may not have the privilege to carry a pregnancy to term, for those who need to terminate due to sexual violence and for those who face dire economic circumstances if they expand their families.

SisterReach stands in solidarity with women and birth-able people across the globe. May our choices always be ours to make.

Monica Simpson, executive director, SisterSong

We have seen the harm and indignity caused by policies designed to limit or interfere with our ability to control our own bodies and futures.

We trust women of color to manage our health and plan our families. We will never stop fighting for the rights and liberation of women and girls around the world.

We are in this for the liberation of our people. That is why we are proud to speak out to get rid of the Helms Amendment and any law or policy imposing the will of the state on our decisions about our lives.

Jocelyn Foye, The Womxn Project

There is a dangerous and calculated agenda to take away all access to abortion. Whether it is abortion bans pushed through the US or the harmful policies we export across the globe, politicians are trying to deny us the agency and autonomy in our own reproductive lives. And like other political games, these policies fall hardest on marginalized communities who already struggle to get healthcare.

We are proud to work with our partners to get rid of the Helms Amendment and take on any attempt to take away our most personal decisions.

Mark Harrington, executive director, Treatment Action Group

Access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, including abortions, is absolutely essential to the fight to end HIV, hepatitis C, and other STIs.

The Helms Amendment is a human rights violation that has impeded our collective progress for 47 years, and we must not allow it to do so for even a day longer. TAG strongly supports the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere

Renee Bracey Sherman, executive director, We Testify

The Helms Amendment is an outdated, xenophobic and racist policy that forces people of other nations to abide by horrific American anti-abortion beliefs. The Helms Amendment is unjust and colonialist at its core.

The We Testify abortion storytellers will not stay silent as our loved ones in other countries are barred from the freedoms we're afforded in the constitution. Everyone loves someone who had an abortion. We've had abortions and we know the powerful impact safe access has had on our lives.

It's time for the United States to end its imperialist reign on the world and repeal the Helms Amendment to ensure everyone has access to abortion care, no matter where they live.

Seneca Joyner, manager of community organizing, Women's Medical Fund - PA

Bodily autonomy, mutual aid, and community care are all values Women's Medical Fund is rooted deeply in. The only thing worse than experiencing the impediments caused by the Hyde Amendment in the US is knowing that the Helms Amendment inflicts that racialized and gendered economic violence across the globe.

As with all struggles for liberation, our fight to end abortion stigma and restriction here is intimately tied to ending those barriers for our families, friends, and comrades internationally. Both at home and abroad pregnant people and those that care for them are being harmed every day by this inhumane policy that seeks to control what people can say, know, and do about their reproductive care.

While this harm is both intentional and widespread-- we have within our power the opportunity to put a stop to it. It is well past time that we end the misinformation, fearmongering, and coercion/manipulation caused by this global gag rule.

We support, in the strongest possible terms, that the Helms Amendment be repealed.