

Support the Global HER Act to Permanently Repeal the Global Gag Rule

The Global Gag Rule prioritizes politics over health and rights

One of the Biden administration's first actions in office was to rescind the Global Gag Rule (GGR), which had been in place during the four years of the Trump-Pence administration. When in effect, this policy requires foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to choose between receiving U.S. global health assistance and providing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care. This policy cuts off funding and supplies to some of the most trusted and experienced health care providers, interferes in health care providers' relationships with their clients and stifles advocacy efforts — endangering the health and lives of people, especially women and girls around the world.

Congress can make sure the GGR never returns by passing the Global Health, Empowerment and Rights (Global HER) Act.

What is the GGR?

The GGR is an executive branch policy that bans any foreign NGO from receiving U.S. global health funding if the NGO performs, counsels or refers patients on abortion care or if it advocates for the liberalization of local abortion laws using private, non-U.S. funds.

First instituted by President Reagan in 1984, the policy has since been imposed under every Republican administration and rescinded under each Democratic administration. However, President Trump dramatically expanded the scope of the GGR, which previously only applied to family planning and reproductive health assistance, to all global health assistance in 2017. Foreign NGOs working on U.S.-funded programs to address issues including maternal and child health, nutrition, HIV, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, as well as family planning, were now forced to comply with the policy if they wanted to remain eligible to receive U.S. assistance.

The harmful health impacts of a dangerous policy

The policy resulted in reduced access to health services, especially for hard-to-reach groups, including rural populations, youth and adolescents as well as LGBT+ individuals. Some communities were left without any qualified health providers. Furthermore, the GGR curbed local efforts to liberalize in-country abortion laws, which are critical to reducing unsafe abortion and decreasing maternal mortality.

The policy also created a chilling effect where organizations, out of an over-abundance of caution, self-censored or discontinued services allowable under the policy, such as post-abortion care, which further harmed communities in need of services. This chilling effect does not vanish when the policy is rescinded. If we do not help providers overcome the fear, chaos and confusion left in the wake of the policy, individuals will continue to be denied needed and allowable services. Additionally, the back and forth created from one administration to another makes providers question whether



COSPONSOR THE GLOBAL HER ACT

We encourage you to support the health and rights of women, girls and their communities by cosponsoring the Global HER Act to permanently repeal this harmful policy.

This bill would amend the Foreign Assistance Act, the permanent authorizing statute, to:

1. Establish that foreign NGOs can remain eligible to receive U.S. global health assistance if they provide abortion services, counseling or referrals for abortion with non-U.S. funds.
2. Ensure that foreign NGOs can use non-U.S. funds for advocacy and lobbying efforts (consistent with the laws that govern U.S. NGOs receiving foreign assistance) to liberalize abortion laws in the areas where they work.
3. Guarantee that foreign NGOs and their staff, including health care providers, participating in U.S.-supported programs can maintain their right to free speech without U.S. interference.

To be added as a cosponsor of the Global HER Act, please reach out to staff in the offices of Representative Barbara Lee or Senator Jeanne Shaheen.

or not they want to engage with the United States as a funder.

The GGR undermines U.S. global health investments and goals

The United States has long been the world's largest funder of global health programs, including efforts to end preventable maternal and child mortality and fight HIV/AIDS. However, the GGR when in place undermines these investments and goals by disqualifying highly effective organizations from receiving funding because they will not comply with a U.S. political agenda and by saddling all NGOs receiving U.S. global health assistance with increased administrative burdens around monitoring and compliance.