



# THE GLOBAL GAG RULE

The Global Gag Rule is one of the most harmful policies ever enacted on United States foreign aid. The policy strips US funding from foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) if they use their own, non-US funding to provide abortion (even where legal), offer counseling around abortion as an option, or provide referrals for abortion services. The Global Gag Rule also prevents foreign NGOs from engaging in advocacy around the impacts of unsafe abortion in their own countries, despite the fact that unsafe abortion remains a leading cause of maternal mortality and morbidity in many countries. Each year, there are nearly 33 million unsafe abortions worldwide, leading to up to 37,310 preventable maternal deaths.

## DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES

Every Republican president since 1984 has imposed the Global Gag Rule (called the Mexico City Policy by its supporters) on US international family planning aid, while every Democratic president has rescinded it. During his first term in office, Donald Trump introduced a radically expanded version of the policy, applying it to all US foreign assistance funds. At the beginning of his second term, Trump reinstated this version of the policy before abruptly terminating nearly all foreign aid contracts. Though the full effects of these moves cannot yet be known, they will certainly be devastating.

Data from a 2019 study by researchers at Stanford University show that the version of the Global Gag Rule imposed by George W. Bush between 2001 and 2008—a less expansive version than the one imposed under Donald Trump—was associated with a 40% increase in the number of abortions in the sub-Saharan countries most affected by the policy. These findings demonstrate what should be intuitively obvious: when access to family planning decreases, unplanned pregnancies—and as a result, abortion rates—go up.

Past iterations of the Global Gag Rule have led to contraceptive stockouts, staff layoffs, and clinic closures around the world. Trump's expanded version of the policy has also affected efforts to address malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, and clean water initiatives, as well as other programs. In the face of such impacts, attempts to frame the Global Gag Rule as a pro-life policy are beyond absurd.

## THE GLOBAL HER ACT

Because the Global Gag Rule has always been implemented and repealed via executive action, the only way to end the cycle is through a permanent, legislative repeal via the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights Act (Global HER Act). The bill was reintroduced in the 119th Congress on January 28, 2025.

The Global HER Act would prevent any future president from unilaterally imposing the Global Gag Rule again. Passing the Global HER Act is essential if the United States truly wants to preserve life and health of vulnerable populations around the world. And it's a necessary step toward making American foreign policy more democratic, rational, and just.

### GLOBAL HER ACT DETAILS

#### SENATE

**Bill Number:** S.280

**Sponsor:** Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**Bill Number:** H.R.764

**Sponsor:** Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL-22)