

**RECOMMENDATION FOR THE FY 2021 STATE-FOREIGN OPERATIONS BILL:
Deletion of the reiterations of the Helms Amendment**

The following endorsing organizations respectfully request that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs remove the harmful and redundant reiterations of the Helms Amendment in the FY 2021 appropriations bill.

The Helms Amendment prohibits the use of U.S. foreign assistance funds for “the performance of abortion as a method of family planning.” This provision hurts millions of people around the world who live in areas that rely heavily on U.S. foreign assistance in order to fund health programs by restricting the ability of individuals to make their own personal medical decisions and access comprehensive reproductive health care. Furthermore, the Helms amendment has been over-implemented as a complete ban on U.S. funding for abortion, even in cases of rape, incest, or a life-endangering pregnancy.

U.S. foreign assistance should expand access to quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services for all people; this includes safe, legal, and accessible abortion. Unsafe abortion is a global health crisis. Annually, there are more than 25 million unsafe abortions worldwide that lead to millions of injuries and tens of thousands of preventable maternal deaths. The Helms amendment exacerbates this crisis by putting the safe abortion care that people want and need out of reach.

Over the last two decades, many countries have liberalized their abortion laws, magnifying the impact of the Helms Amendment as a significant barrier to patients receiving the care they want and need and to which they are legally entitled. U.S. restrictions must not stand in the way of access to legal health care. U.S. policy should explicitly support access to safe and legal abortion throughout the world, as a part of U.S. efforts to advance health, human rights, and gender equity, and addressing gender-based violence.

For too long this policy has impeded the ability of people around the world to access the health care they want and need. The Helms Amendment has been in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the permanent statute governing U.S. foreign assistance programs, since 1973. Subsequently, it has, without reason, been reiterated in two separate sections of the appropriations bill every year for nearly three and half decades. It’s time for this harmful policy to be repealed wherever it appears in U.S. law, thereby allowing the use of U.S. funds for safe abortion services worldwide. Removing these reiterations in the appropriations bill would be a powerful step toward ensuring that US foreign policy expands access to quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services including safe, legal, and accessible abortion, for all.

**PROPOSED DELETIONS FROM THE FY 2020 FURTHER CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATIONS ACT (H.R. 1865, P.L. 116-94)** – see strikethrough for subsections recommended
for deletion.

TITLE III
BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

...Provided further, That none of the funds made available under this Act may be used to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions:

TITLE VII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

PROHIBITION ON FUNDING FOR ABORTIONS AND INVOLUNTARY STERILIZATION

SEC. 7018. None of the funds made available to carry out part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, may be used to pay for the performance of abortions as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions.

ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSERS