

Support International Family Planning and Reproductive Health
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Via Fax:

2 pages

November 8, 2007

Dear (FY08 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Conferee):

We are writing to urge the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Conference Committee to maintain the \$461 million funding level for bilateral family planning and reproductive health programs included in the Senate's version of the bill and to adopt the \$40 million contribution for the United Nations Population Fund contained in the House bill. Ensuring funding at these levels is a critical first step in improving the health of tens of millions of women and men in the developing world who lack access to basic reproductive health care.

Much of the funding in the development assistance account yields benefits across several areas outside the core funding stream. Family planning and reproductive health services are among the investments yielding the broadest impact in numbers of lives saved and in improved health. Yet when adjusted for inflation, current U.S. bilateral funding for family planning and reproductive health programs is 41% less than in FY 1995. At the same time these steep funding reductions have taken place, the number of women of reproductive age in the developing world alone has increased by approximately 275 million women.

Family planning and reproductive health programs are important in their own right and because of the multiple benefits realized by families and communities beyond the direct services provided. These funds:

- provide services and contraception to enable people to choose when to become pregnant and to have the number of children they want and can support;
- reduce unintended pregnancies and consequently the number of abortions;
- promote healthy pregnancies and births;
- improve the health of infants and children;
- enable increased prevention and testing for sexually transmitted infection, including HIV, – and referrals into treatment and care;
- ease pressure on natural resources, and help families better meet basic needs for water, food, and energy; and
- in the longer term help promote social, economic and political stability.

These benefits warrant the minimal but critical increase called for by the Senate. In fact, without the additional investments in family planning and reproductive health programs provided in the Senate bill, we will continue to fall behind in the effort to improve global health.

We thank you in advance for making these investments.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC)
American Jewish World Service
American Medical Student Association
Americans for UNFPA
California Microbicide Initiative
CARE
Catholics for a Free Choice
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
The Center for HIV Law and Policy
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women Policy Studies
Chicago Foundation for Women
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (CHAIN)
Gay Men's Health Crisis
Global AIDS Alliance
Global Health Council
HIV Medicine Association
International Center for Research on Women
International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region
International Women's Health Coalition
Izaak Walton League of America
Jewish Women International
John Snow, Inc.
NARAL Pro Choice America
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Audubon Society
National Council of Jewish Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
Pathfinder
Physicians for Human Rights/USA
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Action International
Population Connection
Population Council
Population Services International
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Sierra Club
The AIDS Institute
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society
United Nations Foundation
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
Women of Reform Judaism
The Woodhull Freedom Foundation

cc: FY08 State-Foreign Affairs Operations Conferees