



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**After Failed Attempt at UN to Roll Back Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights,  
Trump Administration Expands Global Gag Rule to Further Restrict Health Care Around the  
World**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – During a hearing on the U.S. Department of State’s budget request for FY 2020 on Capitol Hill today, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo defended the Trump administration’s plan to expand its restrictions for people around the world to access comprehensive health care by extending the Global Gag Rule to more non-U.S. organizations. Pompeo announced the new expansion of the Global Gag Rule yesterday at a press conference during which he also announced cuts to U.S. funding to the Organization of American States (OAS) as punishment for commenting on abortion in the Latin America and Caribbean region. These announcements come after the administration’s failed efforts to remove sexual and reproductive health from the agreed conclusions of the United Nation’s Commission on the Status of Women earlier this month.

**Statement from Serra Sippel, president of the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE):**

“Since day one, the Trump administration has been relentless in its crusade to deny women around the world access to comprehensive health services, including abortion. The announcement to further expand the Global Gag Rule and cut funding to the Organization of American States shows that the Trump administration prioritizes its ideology over science and data – and, most importantly, women’s lives.

“Secretary Pompeo was dishonest to Congress and the American people when he stated on Capitol Hill today that there hasn’t been a single reduction to women’s health care related to the Global Gag Rule. Over the past two years, the Trump administration has turned a blind eye to data and evidence that illustrate the harms of the Global Gag Rule. Through the six-month review, correspondence and reports, numerous governments, members of Congress, researchers, and global health and rights organizations have delivered evidence to the U.S. Department of State and USAID that show the harmful impact of policies that restrict speech and comprehensive health care. Evidence does not support the Trump administration’s claims that it protects life in its global health assistance. Data show that its policies threaten life everywhere.

"I have seen the destructive impact of the Global Gag Rule on people and health systems first hand. I have visited clinics in Mozambique who had to [cut](#) highly successful HIV prevention services for girls and young women, laid off effective and needed health workers, and end counseling for cancer prevention. Because of this dangerous and inhumane policy, [31 countries](#) have reported a disruption in their HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment services including work on cervical cancer, contraceptive provision, and legal abortion services.

"Contrary to Secretary Pompeo's claims that the policy will end abortion, data on the Global Gag Rule shows the policy increases abortion rates. The policy also forces women to seek abortions out in unsafe ways, causing more harm and death. In fact, between 2001 and 2008, when the Global Gag Rule was in effect under former President George W. Bush, women in Latin America were three times more likely to have an abortion compared to when the policy was not in effect. During this same time frame, women in sub-Saharan Africa were two times more likely to have an abortion compared to when the policy was not in effect.

"We condemn the Trump administration's latest actions to further deny women and girls around the world access to safe and effective comprehensive health care and urge them to critically examine the data and employ evidence-based policies."

CHANGE will continue to monitor the impact of the Trump administration's further expansion of the Global Gag Rule.

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[CHANGE](#) is a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization that promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights as a means to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, by shaping the public's conversation, elevating women's voices, and influencing U.S. and global policies. We are guided by our vision of a world that respects, protects, and honors sexual and reproductive rights for all. Our work is grounded in and driven by a human rights framework at the intersection of multiple sectors including women's rights, human rights, family planning, maternal health, HIV and AIDS, and gender-based violence.