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New Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Index Gives USAID High Marks in Meeting US Global Health Commitments, White House Drops from A- to C-

Center for Health and Gender Equity Launches First-of-its-Kind Index to Grade U.S. Government's Global Health Commitments on a Composite of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Issues

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE), a U.S.-based sexual and reproductive health and rights organization, launched the [*Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Index: Grading U.S. Global Health Assistance*](#) in partnership with the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University. The Index is the first tool ever to critically assess the U.S. government's global health policies and funding that impact sexual and reproductive health and rights, and measures its performance by grading it annually.

VIEW THE INDEX HERE: <https://srhrindex.genderhealth.org/>.

The launch of the Index comes on the heels of reports of [an aggressive campaign from the Trump administration](#) to ban U.S. diplomats' use of the terms "sexual and reproductive health," "comprehensive sexuality education," and other gender-related terms that are necessary to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in U.S. global health policy.

"It is civil society's duty to hold the U.S. government accountable to its commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights in global health funding, and to ensure that it is transparent in its decisions," **said Serra Sippel, president of CHANGE.** "For example, the White House's grades dropped consequently from an A- in 2016 to a C- in 2017 because of the Trump administration's expansion of the Global Gag Rule and its decision to entirely defund the United Nations Population Fund. The White House has clearly prioritized its conservative ideology over the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls globally. While the White House proclaims it is protecting life through its global health assistance, its policies brazenly ignore evidence, gender, and human rights. This is why the U.S. government must be held accountable to its commitments toward sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls around the world."

The U.S. government's overall grade in 2016 was a B (85.1) and a C (76.7) in 2017. During the same years, the six federal government actors that the Index measures had the following grades:

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Actor	2016	2017
White House	A- (92.2)	C- (72.6)
Congress	B- (80.8)	C+ (78.4)
U.S. Agency for International Development	B+ (87.2)	A- (91.5)
U.S. Department of State	B- (80.9)	B- (82.5)
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	D+ (69.4)	D+ (69.4)
U.S. Department of Defense	D+ (69.4)	D+ (69.4)

In addition, the U.S. government's grades dropped significantly from 2016 to 2017 across all three domains of sexual and reproductive health and rights that the Index analyzes:

Domain	2016	2017
Family planning	B- (81.8)	D (65.1)
Maternal and child health	B (83.8)	C+ (78)
HIV and AIDS	B+ (89.6)	B (86.8)

The Index grades the White House and U.S. Congress, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Defense. It uses standardized indicators to assess these actors' policies, investments, and programs across three domains of sexual and reproductive health and rights — family planning, maternal and child health, and HIV and AIDS — for their gender-responsiveness, basis in evidence, responsiveness to need, and consistency with internationally recognized human rights principles.

The U.S. government receives an overall grade for each domain and a final composite grade for sexual and reproductive health and rights in U.S. global health assistance. The Index also measures the



availability of data needed to assign a grade. Known as the transparency grade, it represents the expectation that the federal government should make data about U.S. global health assistance available, accessible, and informative.

Ratings are assigned to each policy and budget-related action taken by specific actors (within their scope of power). All actors receive a grade per domain in which they do relevant work. The Index also grades actors under circumstances in which the Helms Amendment and Global Gag Rule are removed and if full funding has been requested.

“The methodology of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Index is rigorously designed to be sensitive to and reflective of both negative actions contributing to restrictions on global sexual and reproductive health and rights and positive actions contributing to their expansion,” **Bergen Cooper, director of policy research at CHANGE, explained.** “This Index gives public access to information so that advocates can make specific, evidence-based recommendations to the U.S. government, and the government in turn can take action toward strengthening the impact of its global health assistance.”

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The [Center for Health and Gender Equity \(CHANGE\)](https://www.genderhealth.org) 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.