Dear Supporter,

Your voice matters. Despite a full assault by some U.S. Members of Congress on sexual and reproductive health and rights at home and abroad, your advocacy efforts have helped maintain our ground.

Last month, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule. The vote came right after CHANGE’s fourth annual Healthy Future Action Summit, which brought 20 participants from five states to Washington, D.C., for intensive training and analysis of U.S. foreign policy on sexual and reproductive health, and to meet with their respective lawmakers. Every senator they met with that also voted on the amendment, voted in favor of repealing the Global Gag Rule—including three Republicans. The amendment still has to be approved by the full Senate, the House, and President Obama, but it is a step in the right direction.

It is a reminder that these efforts are important, and do make a difference for women and girls globally. We intend to continue making a difference at the International AIDS Conference here in Washington, D.C., next month, where we’ll be advocating for woman-centered HIV prevention and treatment.

Your gift to CHANGE is another way you can make a difference for women and girls. Please consider supporting our efforts to bring women and girls into the center of U.S. global health policies.

Many thanks as always.

In solidarity,

Serra Sippel
President, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

In this Issue
GHI Advocacy Workshop in Guatemala, April 11-13
Healthy Future Action Summit, May 6-8
What’s New: CHANGE Publications: Global Health Initiative Progress Reports, Ethiopia and Guatemala
Washington Update
CHANGE in the Media
Support CHANGE

Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube

GHI Advocacy Workshop in Guatemala, April 11-13
In April, CHANGE joined our colleagues in Guatemala to promote the voices of women and girls in shaping the Global Health Initiative (GHI) on the ground. The GHI marks an important shift in U.S. global health assistance by emphasizing an integrated, woman-focused, country-driven approach, and has the potential to improve overall health outcomes and increase the efficiency of U.S. global health policy. Guatemala was one of the first countries to implement GHI’s approach.

From April 11-13, 23 representatives of Guatemalan organizations dedicated to promoting sexual and reproductive health participated in a CHANGE-sponsored workshop and roundtable in Antigua, Guatemala. CHANGE facilitators from the U.S. and Guatemala led an advocacy workshop to strengthen participants’ skills to develop effective
advocacy objectives and persuasive messages on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Additionally, the full group of participants learned about the GHI, studied CHANGE’s progress report on GHI implementation in Guatemala along with the GHI supplemental guidance on gender equality, and analyzed civil society’s role in ensuring GHI promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights. By the end of the workshop, representatives of each organization committed to forming a committee on GHI that will continue to meet, share information about GHI with each other and with their organizations, and advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights with U.S. officials and other stakeholders in Guatemala.

**Healthy Future Action Summit, May 6-8**

“Life-changing experience.” That was how one participant described CHANGE’s fourth annual Healthy Future Action Summit that brought 20 advocates representing Alaska, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, and Minnesota to Washington, D.C., May 6-8. The training focused on advocacy for increased funding and policy support for international family planning and sexual and reproductive health.

After completing two days of advocacy training conducted by CHANGE staff, participants met with their respective senators and representatives, and succeeded in securing support or promises of support for policies ranging from full funding of international family planning, and the Global Democracy Promotion Act, which would repeal the Global Gag Rule.

The participants left the Summit with plans to follow up in their home states, continuing to educate their elected leaders about what sexual and reproductive health and rights means to them – and to women globally.

**What’s New**

**New CHANGE Publications: Global Health Initiative Progress Reports, Ethiopia and Guatemala**

This month, CHANGE will release reports documenting the progress of the Obama administration’s Global Health Initiative (GHI) in Ethiopia and Guatemala, both target countries of the GHI.

To assess the development of GHI’s implementation and the extent to which it is advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, CHANGE staff and consultants interviewed stakeholders, engaged local civil society organizations, and conducted site visits in each country. CHANGE staff also met with policy makers in Washington, D.C., and reviewed policy documents and GHI country strategies.

The analyses should be considered a preliminary snapshot of a developing initiative. Some findings include that while the GHI’s key principles of a focus on women and girls and health sector integration are already making a positive difference in how health programs are designed and implemented, U.S. agencies must ensure that local civil society organizations and women’s rights groups are meaningfully engaged in program planning, implementation, and evaluation. The reports can be found [here](#).

CHANGE will release an additional progress report on Nigeria by the end of the year.

**Washington Update**

Last month, the Appropriations Committees of both the Senate and the House of Representatives passed bills that affect funding for family planning and reproductive health programs for women and girls overseas. While it’s still early in the budget process, the funding levels and policy riders in these bills set the stage for negotiations later in the year.

**House**

The House Appropriations Committee voted:

- To cut international family planning funding to $461 million (That’s $149 million below the current funding level and $180 million below the President’s request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013).
- To eliminate all funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- To include language to legislatively reinstate the Global Gag Rule (or Mexico City Policy), a harmful policy restriction that denies family planning funding to organizations that provide legal and ethical services and referrals to their patients with non-U.S. funding.
- In an effort led by Nita Lowey (D-NY), three amendments were offered to fight against the cuts to funding for international family planning and re-establishing funding for UNFPA. All three amendments failed, despite attempts by Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Barbara Lee (D-CA) to narrow their amendments to
fund UNFPA for only certain activities, and for target countries without U.S.-supported family planning programs, respectively.

Senate

The Senate Appropriations Committee voted:

- To increase funding for international family planning and reproductive health to $700 million with an additional $44.5 million allocated to UNFPA.
- To approve an amendment by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) to legislatively repeal the Global Gag Rule, with bipartisan support, including votes in favor from Republican Senators Susan Collins (ME), Lisa Murkowski (AK), and Mark Kirk (IL).

The bills will still need to be approved by the House and Senate before Senate and House negotiators meet to iron out the details of a final foreign assistance budget that they will send to President Obama for his signature.

CHANGE in the Media

Huffington Post: "Creating an AIDS-free Generation at Home and Abroad"
AIDS Foundation of Chicago: "A Global Dream for Women’s Health" (Melissa Janiszewski, HFAS participant)

Support CHANGE

As we prepare for a summer full of advocacy opportunities, we hope you will consider supporting CHANGE with a financial contribution. Any way you choose to contribute, your support strengthens our efforts to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide through U.S. foreign policies and programs. For federal employees, CHANGE is part of the Combined Federal Campaign, #62113.