



CHANGE Matters

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Dear Friend,

While summer may have brought more heat than light to domestic health care debates, we at CHANGE are seeing encouraging developments on global sexual and reproductive health and rights. I just returned from California, where CHANGE staff were awed by local advocates' refusal to separate their struggle for sexual and reproductive health care at home from that of women and girls overseas, even in the face of California's drastic funding cuts. They also showed a profound understanding of the connections among sexual and reproductive health issues - HIV/AIDS, family planning, and maternal and child health.

Here in Washington, as we seek to make these connections for policy makers, we are pleased to be finding open doors, with our analysis and input welcomed and even sought after by officials within the Obama administration. In July, I was joined by several other leaders of sexual and reproductive health organizations in a meeting with Ambassador Melanne Verveer, head of the Office of Global Women's Issues at the State Department. Ambassador Verveer was particularly interested to meet with us given her role in shaping the maternal and child health efforts within President Obama's Global Health Initiative. We expressed our specific support for their efforts to tackle the issue of unsafe abortion and make linkages between maternal health, family planning and HIV/AIDS.

In an August meeting, newly appointed Global AIDS Coordinator Dr. Eric Goosby showed a readiness to break from the past in tackling global HIV and AIDS. He indicated an eagerness to integrate HIV/AIDS programs with family planning programs. He also emphasized that U.S. programs must ensure they are addressing the needs of vulnerable groups - including women who work in the sex sector who have found their access to prevention and treatment stymied by the anti-prostitution loyalty oath within U.S. PEPFAR law. Ambassador Goosby and senior leadership at OGAC echoed this commitment at a follow-up meeting CHANGE requested with Dr. Shilpa Merchant from India, who shared with them how the law negatively impacted her work with women in the sex

sector in Mumbai.

We're looking forward to a busy and exciting fall; one that we anticipate will bring more of these productive exchanges. We hope we can count on your voices to help move these issues forward!

In solidarity,



Serra Sippel, President
Center for Health and Gender Equity

"We cannot simply confront individual preventable illnesses in isolation. The world is interconnected, and that demands an integrated approach to global health."

--President Obama, [remarks on his new Global Health Initiative](#)
May 5, 2009

Investing in Reproductive Justice for All: CHANGE's New Publication on Comprehensive SRHR

What is "comprehensive" when it comes to sexual and reproductive health, and why does it matter? A new report from CHANGE establishes a groundbreaking framework to assess sexual and reproductive health programs based on field visits to the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, and Botswana. [Investing in Reproductive Justice for All: Toward a U.S. Foreign Policy on Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#) highlights successful comprehensive, rights-based approaches and recommends U.S. policy actions that will fertilize such programming.

The report argues that politically-motivated restrictions and the United States' foreign assistance structure combine to create unnecessary barriers to effective, comprehensive, and integrated health care that includes HIV prevention, maternal health and family planning. Because of these barriers, the U.S. is losing countless opportunities to protect the life, health, and rights of women and girls worldwide.

This fall, advocates from the three countries will bring U.S. audiences compelling case studies and fresh evidence from the field on the importance of comprehensive approaches.

Foreign Assistance Reform: CHANGE Mobilizes California SRHR Champions

As members of Congress traveled home to their districts for August recess, CHANGE also headed to the district level to train and engage advocates on U.S. foreign assistance reform and the importance of integrating sexual

and reproductive health and rights. First stop on the training tour was Los Angeles, where Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) represents the 28th district. Rep. Berman, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, is leading the rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, and is a crucial target for influencing the contents of the new legislation. San Francisco was the second stop on CHANGE's training tour, represented by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA/8th), whose support for comprehensive reproductive health in the FAA rewrite will be critical.

During the week of August 17, CHANGE brought together representatives from reproductive justice, HIV/AIDS, women's rights and faith-based organizations and members of positive women networks in both Los Angeles and San Francisco for trainings on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, advocacy and foreign assistance reform. Advocates are planning follow-up in-district meetings with Rep. Berman and Rep. Pelosi to urge their support of including comprehensive reproductive health as an important strategy for reducing poverty in the FAA rewrite. In addition, Los Angeles advocates put their new knowledge and skills to immediate use at a meeting with the district office of Rep. Diane Watson, a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, who welcomed the advocates' request.

The trainings culminated with community roundtable discussions in each city on reproductive health and policy reform at home and abroad, hosted by CHANGE and local partner organizations. Conversation centered upon reproductive health within domestic health care reform and foreign assistance modernization, with community commentary raising issues from addressing stigma and discrimination to making reproductive health services friendly and accessible to sex workers in the U.S. and globally. Roundtable co-sponsors included: [AIDS Project Los Angeles](#), [WORLD](#) (Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease), the U.S. Positive Women's Network, the [Pacific Institute for Women's Health](#), [Feminist Majority](#), [Artists for a New South Africa](#), [Planned Parenthood Los Angeles](#) and [Bixby Program in Population and Reproductive Health - UCLA](#).

Intern Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill: Interns Urge Legislators to Support SRHR at Home and Abroad

On August 11, interns from around the country representing a broad array of Washington, D.C.-based organizations spent the day on Capitol Hill for the third annual Intern Advocacy Day, sponsored by [Advocates for Youth](#), the [Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States](#) (SIECUS), [AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families](#), and [CHANGE](#). After a morning training, interns visited 13 Congressional offices, advocating for the Responsible Education about Life (REAL) Act in the [House](#) and [Senate](#) and the integration of sexual and reproductive health in President Obama's [Global Health Initiative](#). One group of constituents had the opportunity to meet directly with Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), who invited them to follow up with her directly. The Advocacy Day was the capstone event of the Intern Brown Bag Series on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS which equipped interns with the information and skills they needed to put their passion into action. One intern reflected that the experience was an "opportunity to get [my] voice heard by people who make laws for our country."

Appropriations Update: Increases to International Reproductive Health Funding

This summer the U.S. House and Senate took important steps to advance U.S. foreign policy and funding for

sexual and reproductive health programs abroad - including HIV/AIDS, maternal and health and family planning. During fiscal year 2010 appropriations deliberations in July, the full House and the Senate Appropriations Committee passed their respective State, Foreign Operations bills that included approximately \$5.7 billion for global HIV/AIDS programs. Maternal and child health received \$538 million in the House bill and \$555 million in the Senate Appropriations Committee version of the bill.

In a key victory for women's health, international family planning and reproductive health received historic increases in the House and Senate. The House State, Foreign Operations bill contained \$648.5 million, including \$60 million for UNFPA, a total increase of \$103.5 million from the 2009 enacted levels. The Senate Appropriations Committee bill included \$628.5 million with a designation of \$50 million for UNFPA. In addition, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to include an amendment offered by Sen. Lautenberg (D-NJ) that would bring an end to the political back and forth surrounding the [Mexico City Policy \("Global Gag Rule"\)](#) by preventing a future administration hostile to reproductive rights from reinstating it by executive order. In other words, if the amendment is eventually signed into law by President Obama, it would change the law governing U.S. foreign aid programs so that Congress would have to pass legislation reinstating the Global Gag Rule, rather than a President having the ability to unilaterally issue an executive order.

There are still many steps remaining in the appropriations process, which will resume after the August recess. First, the full Senate must pass its fiscal year 2010 State, Foreign Operations appropriations bill. From there, the House and Senate must meet to reconcile the differences between the two funding bills before legislation can be signed by the President. Whether the Global Gag Rule amendment and the higher funding levels survive the legislative process and get written into law will depend in part on whether and how loudly advocates voice their support. CHANGE will keep you informed this fall about how to raise your voice and help ensure access to crucial reproductive health services worldwide!

What's New: SRHR Resources and Initiatives

- **Field Report:** [Investing in Reproductive Justice for All: Toward a U.S. Foreign Policy on Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#), Center for Health and Gender Equity.
- **50+ Organizations Sign On to SRHR Statement:** "[Action Steps for the Health and Rights of Women and Youth: Alleviating Poverty and Promoting Human Security and Stability](#)," organized by Advocates for Youth, CEDPA, CHANGE, Feminist Majority Foundation, IPPF/WHO, International Women's Health Coalition, and the United Nations Foundation.
- **Coming Soon:** CHANGE's Facebook launch! Stay tuned for more information about CHANGE's new Facebook profile, which will feature campaign items, photos, video, events and much more!

Support CHANGE

Please consider making a donation today - there are many ways to contribute! Federal employees can now contribute to CHANGE via the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for 2009. Our CFC number is 62113.

You can also make a contribution online - [click here to donate](#). Any way you choose to contribute, your support

strengthens our efforts to ensure U.S. international policies and programs promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide.

The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) is a U.S.-based non-governmental organization whose mission is to ensure that U.S. international policies and programs promote sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls worldwide.

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