

March 4, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We are 55 organizations dedicated to promoting reproductive health and rights around the world. We write to urge the Administration to correct the unduly restrictive implementation of the Helms Amendment by issuing guidance to USAID and the State Department to support safe abortion services in the cases of rape, incest, and life endangerment, and to do so without concessions.

We are concerned that proposals are being considered that would enshrine special exemptions for groups that object even to providing *referrals* for life-saving abortions, or abortions to women who have been raped. We strongly oppose such exemptions, which put the interests of grant recipients ahead of the critical needs of some of the world's most marginalized women—the very people whom our foreign assistance is intended to help. We also object to the establishment of a harmful policy under which an organization's refusal to provide safe abortion services to a woman who has been raped or who faces a life-endangering pregnancy may not be considered when evaluating grant proposals.

Extending special protections to opponents of women's health would represent a tremendous and unnecessary capitulation to groups that seek to eliminate safe access to abortion care altogether. Prioritizing their funding above women's lives distorts the goals of foreign assistance and sets a dangerous precedent.

We call upon you to correct the unduly restrictive implementation of the Helms Amendment as soon as possible, and to do so without making harmful and unnecessary concessions that undermine women's health and wellbeing.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Humanist Association  
Amnesty International USA  
Anti-Defamation League  
California Women's Law Center  
Catholics for Choice  
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)  
Center for Inquiry  
Center for Reproductive Rights  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at UC Berkeley School of Law

EngenderHealth  
Family Care International  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
GetEQUAL  
Global Doctors for Choice  
Global Fund for Women  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
Ibis Reproductive Health  
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc.  
International Center for Research on Women  
International Women's Health Coalition  
Ipas  
John Snow, Inc. (JSI)  
Methodist Federation for Social Action  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Abortion Federation  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
PAI  
Pathfinder International  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Connection Action Fund  
Population Council  
Population Institute  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Religious Institute  
Reproductive Health Technologies Project  
Secular Coalition for America  
Secular Policy Institute  
Sexual Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Sierra Club  
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
Women's Information Network

cc: Ms. Valerie Jarrett  
Chair, White House Council on Women and Girls and Senior Adviser to the President

Ms. Tina Tchen  
Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady  
Executive Director, White House Council on Women and Girls

Ms. Gayle Smith  
Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, National Security Council