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The Honorable Mario Díaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
374 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0926

Dear Chairman Díaz-Balart,

We thank you for your hard work steering the appropriations subcommittee for all foreign operations during such turbulent times. We hope to continue cooperating to mitigate the damage caused by this Administration's ideologies and call on you to continue supporting the world's most disadvantaged, as has been the traditional humanitarian ideal of the American people. Unfortunately, the United States has spent billions of dollars not respecting individual civil and political rights and freedoms but promoting controversial social agendas that are highly contested both domestically and abroad. The time is ripe for redoubled efforts in investing the world's limited resources in humanitarian strategies and development that uphold the inherent dignity of every man, woman, and child served. We make the following requests for the FY'25 appropriations bill to assist in these efforts:

- Request 1: Apply Mexico City policy to all development and humanitarian foreign assistance funding across all agencies.
- Request 2: Apply all pro-life riders.
- Request 3: Protect women and children from all forms of violence and exploitation.
- Request 4: Prohibit funds for initiatives that promote the censorship of free speech.
- Request 5: Reduce funding to international family planning/reproductive health.
- Request 6: Eliminate and reduce funding to UN agencies promoting abortion and mandate annual reporting requirements for US funding.
- Request 7: Oversight and Transparency: Mandate annual reporting requirements for all primes and sub-primes with information available to the public on foreignassistance.gov.
- Request 8: Withhold funding that exports "woke" policies and threatens nations' sovereignty.

Requests for Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations Bill

Request 1: Apply Mexico City policy to all foreign development and humanitarian assistance funding.

To ensure that funding does not go to foreign-based groups that promote or provide abortions, Mexico City Policy language must be included, particularly during Democratic administrations when the executive order mandating this is not in place. Since 1985, presidents have occasionally utilized their executive authority to forbid the funding of abortions in addition to the legal limitations on the sponsorship of abortions by U.S. foreign assistance.

Abortion groups often argue that abortion restrictions, such as the Mexico City Policy, disrupt family planning and other health services. International abortion giants like the International Planned Parenthood Federation and MSI Reproductive Choices, formerly Marie Stopes International, and their affiliates throughout developing regions have repeatedly chosen to forego U.S. funding—and lay off employees, cut salaries, and reduce services—rather than abandon their abortion work to comply with the Mexico City Policy.ⁱ Pro-abortion organizations strongly oppose the policy because it is effective. A previous article, which referred to the Mexico City Policy pejoratively as the “global gag rule,” admitted that the PLGHA “hindered efforts to liberalize and implement abortion laws” and “fractured partnerships and [abortion advocates’] collective power to influence change.”ⁱⁱ

PLGHA protected \$10.8 billion in global health funding from pro-abortion organizations based overseas in 2018ⁱⁱⁱ after former President Donald Trump expanded it to cover USAID's entire global health budget.^{iv} The policy was rescinded in President Joe Biden’s first week, as it has been under all Democratic presidents.

The PLGHA does not apply to assistance provided to national governments or multilateral organizations or provided directly by U.S.-based organizations. For example, this includes funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance; and United Nations organizations such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organization. Also excluded is humanitarian assistance, including Department of State migration and refugee-assistance programs, USAID disaster and humanitarian relief programs, U.S. Department of Defense disaster and humanitarian relief.^v Also excluded is program funding under Gender-based Violence, Education, Water and Sanitation, Population, Health and Environment, and Climate—all areas abortion groups have migrated to.

Notably, the strategies directing these accounts have increased mentions of controversial topics under this administration. Mexico City Policy language should be expanded to all foreign assistance to ensure that no abortion group obtains funds from these accounts.

Request 2: Apply all pro-life riders.

Restrictions on abortion in foreign aid are a component of larger American initiatives to outlaw federal support for abortions. U.S. funds should be granted with all long-standing, pro-life protections. Among these are the Helms Amendment, the restrictions on the Peace Corps, the Biden Amendment, the Siljander Amendment, which prohibits Foreign Assistance funds from being disbursed if the President “certifies” that it would violate any “provisions related to abortions and involuntary sterilizations,” the Kemp-Kasten Amendment, and the Leahy Amendment. This is important to protect U.S. taxpayers from funding abortions and to prevent the United States from being complicit in the expanding abortion infrastructure overseas.

Abortion, even in economic terms, fails to recognize the cost to unborn babies and society more broadly. These costs far outweigh the short-sighted labor market benefits of abortion frequently cited by economists and policymakers. A recent Joint Economic Committee report attempted to estimate the economic impact of abortion in the U.S. alone using CDC abortion data and the Value of a Statistical Life (VSL), commonly used in federal cost-benefit analyses.^{vi} The Department of Transportation’s VSL of \$10.9 million per life, multiplied by the 629,898 legal abortions in the U.S. from the CDC report of 2019, amounts to \$6.9 trillion. Much more than the \$26,000 of income each mother would lose during the first six years of motherhood, as estimated by the Census Bureau.^{vii} U.S. funds should not be used to fund controversial and un-American initiatives that caused the U.S. to lose \$6.9 trillion in 2019.

Request 3: Protect women and children from all forms of violence and exploitation

Prohibit funding to any organization and program that promotes the decriminalization of prostitution and the legitimization of “sex work.” Require all U.S.-funded anti-trafficking organizations and programs to include all the following: (1) a demand reduction component, including criminal prosecution of pimps, sex buyers, and advertising of prostitution, and (2) support for comprehensive exit strategies for women in prostitution and (3) targets to ensure aggressive prosecution of sex-trafficking within countries and across borders.

All prostitution is exploitative and harmful to those being sold, many of whom are victims of human trafficking. Efforts should be undertaken to reduce the demand for prostitution and assist people who have been prostituted to receive necessary services, including access to legitimate work and protection from further exploitation.

Redirect funding for Gender-Based Violence to “Violence against Women and Girls” (VAWG)

The term gender-based violence (GBV) broadens the scope of policies directed toward helping women and girls into broader areas of gender ideology. As a result, GBV language can have the effect, intended or unintended, of rendering women and girls invisible in the very policies intended to help them. Pro-life guardrails should be added to funding for gender-based violence programming (\$250M) and require annual mandatory reporting requirements to the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPs) subcommittee for all prime and subprime

funding awards that include program description and awardees. Additional safeguards may be needed to prevent the terminology of “GBV,” as opposed to “violence against women and girls,” from redirecting funds away from them and toward advancing gender ideological interests. At a minimum, funding toward GBV response and prevention should be framed in a way that would preclude abortion-promoting organizations from being eligible (Mexico City Policy/PLGHA language). This funding should also include helping victims receive justice and ending impunity for perpetrators.

Establish an annual tiered country reporting system for violence against women modeled after the Trafficking in Person tier system that withholds non-essential assistance from countries that fail to make progress on ending this violence and exploitation.

Request 4: Prohibit funds for initiatives that promote the censorship of free speech

Under the Biden administration, the Department of State has signaled its intention to combat so-called “anti-rights” groups while leaving this category ambiguous and undefined. Both in the U.S. and abroad, the “anti-rights” label has been used to target conservative, pro-life, and pro-family organizations because they oppose the co-opting of the language of human rights to advance an abortion and gender-ideology agenda.^{viii} Similarly, the use of the “hate group” label by certain activist groups to target their political opponents has been used to characterize pro-life and pro-family communications as “hate speech” and call for its censorship. The GLIDEFund, a \$2.5 million fund of the U.S. State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, required programs to label opposition to the LGBTQI+ agenda as “anti-democratic” and characterize their opponents’ messaging as “disinformation.” U.S. foreign assistance funding should not be used to censor legitimate political speech, including by socially conservative individuals and organizations, and should not be given to organizations seeking to silence their voices.

Request 5: Reduce funding to international family planning/reproductive health

The fallacy of “unmet need”

All family planning/reproductive health funding should be scaled to meet verified market demand instead of being designated for demand creation through incentives or coercion. Grant funding for voluntary family planning projects only on the conditions they offer: (1) No implementation of quotas or numerical targets for births or family planning acceptors. (2) No payment of incentives or financial rewards for achieving numerical targets. (3) No denial of rights or benefits based on an individual's decision not to accept family planning services. (4) Provision of comprehensive information on health benefits and risks of chosen methods. (5) Provision of experimental contraceptive drugs and devices within scientific studies only with informed participants.

For decades, the central argument in favor of international family planning funding has been the existence of over 200 million women in developing countries with an “unmet need” for contraceptives. This “need,” often framed as an existing demand facing a lack of access, is highly misleading. The Guttmacher Institute, a leading proponent of family planning funding, admits that only about 5% of women with a purported “need” cite a lack of access as the reason

they are not using a family planning method. Instead, most women cite concerns about health risks and side effects, religious or other opposition, perceived infecundity, and other reasons for non-use or discontinuation.^{ix}

Increasingly, family planning organizations, including the global abortion giants International Planned Parenthood Federation and MSI Reproductive Choices, have shifted their focus toward creating demand for their services rather than meeting a “demand” that demonstrably does not exist. Therefore, the rationale behind U.S. funding for family planning should be revisited in line with women’s actual demands on the ground. Family planning funding supplements global abortion groups, allowing them to work in the country and, while there, agitate to change pro-life laws.

Further, the United States continues to promote dangerous contraceptives that are falsely marketed as safe and effective. The injectable contraceptive Depo Provera is one of many examples. Since 2000, USAID has spent over one-quarter of a billion dollars on injectable contraceptives like Depo Provera^x - \$22.1 million in 2022 alone^{xi} - despite scientific evidence that women and young girls risk serious side effects that include a two-fold increased risk of breast cancer, bone density loss, and increased risk of cervical cancer as well as an increased risk of acquiring the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) by nearly fifty percent.^{xii} Concern over bone density loss caused by Depo Provera is so great that it carries a Black Box warning – the strictest warning from the Food and Drug Administration.^{xiii}

Reducing family planning and reproductive health funding will inevitably lead to an outcry from reproductive rights advocates, specifically fearmongering of global catastrophe should the U.S. withdraw funding from population control programs. History, however, has proven that this is not the case. Following the Trump administration’s expansion of the Mexico City Policy, the Dutch-led *She Decides Initiative* established a fund to ensure money will continue to flow without interruption to abortion providers. To date, *She Decides* has raised \$560 million, with nearly 20% coming from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. As founder of *She Decides*, Lilianne Ploumen announced at the annual Lancet Lecture at University College, London, “[I]f the US government is going to take away the 600 million dollars, we will need to find a way to find 600 million dollars somewhere else.”^{xiv} Similarly, when the U.S. defunded UNFPA under former President Donald Trump, a UNFPA spokesman boasted, “Some partners have pulled out of the reproductive health field, but UNFPA has more money than ever.”^{xv}

We must resist the logic that the prevention of maternal mortality necessitates the prevention of pregnancy. Rather, U.S. and international efforts ought to support mothers and children to the greatest degree possible; this goal notably shares global consensus in the United Nations. From 2000 to 2015, maternal mortality rates fell, yet since 2016, this progress has plateaued.

Current maternal mortality remains at roughly 223 deaths per 100,000 live births and is at risk of rising further.^{xvi} Increasing funding for contraceptives when the existing demand is largely saturated and promoting controversial “sexual rights” is not the way to help mothers and children. It does not create concrete healthcare facilities, infrastructure, education, or personnel; rather, tackling maternal mortality requires greater investment and prioritization of mothers and children and the societal structures that support them.

Request 6: Eliminate and reduce funding to UN agencies promoting abortion and mandate annual reporting requirements for US funding

The WHO promotes abortion

The World Health Organization (WHO), which received \$700 million from the U.S. in 2021,^{xvii} continues to promote abortion as a form of “self-help,” including by telemedicine, where it is legally restricted, and as an essential service during pandemic emergencies.^{xviii} Funding should be prohibited from going to the WHO-led, multi-agency Human Reproduction Programme (HRP), which recently published guidance on so-called “safe abortion” and called on nations to repeal their pro-life laws and make abortion widely available and publicly funded while restricting the conscience rights of health institutions and individual providers.^{xix} The HRP’s blatant pro-abortion lobbying warrants an accounting of all US assistance to assure the WHO is not in violation of the Siljander amendment. The Administration is not enforcing this amendment; therefore Congress should exercise its responsibility to ensure the executive branch faithfully executes the laws of the United States.

Funds being made available to the WHO should not be used to implement or support any international convention, agreement, protocol, legal instrument, or agreed outcome with legal force drafted by the intergovernmental negotiating body of the World Health Assembly or any other United Nations body until such instrument has been subject to the requirements of article II, section 2, clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States, which requires the advice and consent of the Senate.

Defund the OHCHR: The OHCHR unlawfully lobbies against and criticizes the U.S. and other pro-life countries

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) includes the principal human rights official in the United Nations and the treaty monitoring bodies, which publish comments and interpretations of UN treaties yet have no binding authority whatsoever. The OHCHR and Treaty monitoring bodies have been increasingly overstepping their mandates and promoting ideological claims on abortion and gender outside of international consensus; the OHCHR claims that abortion is a human right and ought to be enforced in every UN member state, citing the unauthoritative “treaty body jurisprudence” which claims that restrictions to abortion are violations of the right to health, privacy, and freedom from cruel and inhumane treatment.^{xx}

The Office has also criticized the U.S. Dobbs decision to return abortion jurisdiction to states, denouncing the case as “shocking and dangerous” and “without sound legal reasoning,”^{xxi} despite the case not being a matter of global human rights and the UN nor is it a violation to any treaties the US has signed. The U.S. financed OHCHR with \$27.7 million in 2022;^{xxii} in accordance with the Siljander and Helms amendments, the United States should not continue to fund an agency determined to establish abortion as a global right. In addition to pressuring the United States, the OHCHR is also pressuring other pro-life countries into repealing their laws.

The OHCHR has recently called for the decriminalization of prostitution in contrast with all evidence on the reduction of sex trafficking and exploitation of women and children, which

“explode” unless sex buyers are punished by law. The report argues that prostitution is part of the human right to sexual and bodily autonomy. It criticizes governments that aggressively police sex trafficking because it makes it harder for prostitutes and pimps to make money. It also calls on governments to protect “sex workers” through occupational and safety standards and by helping them organize politically, form trade unions, and access legal aid.^{xxiii}

Eliminating U.S. funding to OHCHR is not an affront to human rights; rather, it would remove the support of the American people from a body that actively criticizes American policy with no right to do so. The U.S. is greatly invested in promoting human rights worldwide and withholding funds from entities that promote a distorted and non-consensual understanding of human rights is an important way the U.S. can use its influence to promote authentic human rights.

Defund UN Women for promotion of abortion

UN Women has a mandate to promote the equality and empowerment of women and girls around the world. Unfortunately, UN Women believes access to abortion is necessary to achieve this.^{xxiv} When UN Women assessed progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the lens of gender, they say that legal restrictions, “including the criminalization of abortion, continue to compound the challenges women face in accessing safe sexual and reproductive health care.^{xxv} In addition to promoting abortion as a human right, UN Women issued a report on the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace, and Security” (2000) in which they argued that abortion is a humanitarian right as well: “Ensure that all global humanitarian and local health-care workers are trained in basic life-saving sexual and reproductive health care, in accordance with international human rights standards, as well as emergency response for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including emergency contraception and abortion/post-abortion services.”^{xxvi}

UN Women is discriminatory

UN Women has silenced opposing views by excluding pro-family/life organizations from obtaining space to hold events during the annual women’s conference in New York. In 2020, UN Women instituted new “virtual safety guidelines” to govern in-person and online presentations for NGO events during the Commission on the Status of Women. The guidelines dictate that participating organizations must acknowledge “sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, transphobia, global North domination and other institutionalized forms of oppression” and “value and revere an intersectional approach to feminism.” Pro-life and pro-family groups, many of which prioritize women and are women-led, have been blocked from participating in UN Women parallel events in recent years because of the guidelines, despite claims to be “inclusive.” C-Fam and other groups were denied on the grounds that pro-life values are contrary to the Committee’s values.^{xxvii}

In 2022, the U.S. granted \$48.01 million to UN Women, ranking as one of the highest donor countries globally.^{xxviii}

Defund UNFPA for promoting abortion

UNFPA systematically promotes abortion in its reports and publications. In February 2020, UNFPA cited that “legal barriers to full and equal [sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights] access exist in several areas. Such barriers are most prevalent in the case of legal access to abortion, with an average of just 31 percent achievement in this component.”^{xxxix} This reference to “barriers” includes pro-life laws and gestational limits on abortion in a wide variety of countries. The UNFPA Supplies fund procures abortion drugs and manual vacuum aspirators, which are used in abortions and cannot be procured by USAID due to the Helms Amendment. Despite a lack of consensus on abortion in UN bodies, UNFPA urges UN treaty bodies to impose “an obligation to ensure universal access to [...] safe abortion care.”^{xxx} UNFPA also promotes the use of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in humanitarian settings, which explicitly includes “safe abortion,”^{xxxi} and promotes the acceptance of the term “sexual and reproductive health and rights” in international negotiations. This term has been rejected by global consensus and, to the extent that it has been defined, includes abortion as a right.^{xxxii}

Defund UNESCO and restrict UNICEF funding for the promotion of abortion and gender ideology

In recent years, UNICEF has endorsed contentious interpretations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. As Dr. Susan Yoshihara reports, “UNICEF intervened with Nicaragua’s national assembly to keep abortion legal in that country and to liberalize abortion in the Dominican Republic. It has advocated for the right of children to have confidential sexual health services without parental knowledge, advocated that children have genders outside the male-female binary, and has partnered with the world’s largest abortion providers and advocates to hold conferences that promote abortion of children in the womb.”^{xxxiii}

In the report, *Digital Age Assurance, Age Verification Tools, and Children’s Rights Online across the Globe*, UNICEF claims that not all sexually explicit material ought to be categorized as pornography and that it is not harmful to children. While the report admits that evidence of access to pornography at a young age clearly shows negative effects on psychosocial behavior and well-being, UNICEF claims, “children’s exposure to a certain degree of risk...helps them to build resilience and to prepare for the adult world,” and that pornography can be beneficial for learning sexual information.^{xxxiv}

Concerning global education, UNICEF’s Education Cannot Wait (ECW) initiative promotes access to abortion and contraception to young people in its Gender Strategy documents.^{xxxv} In their Grantees Budget Template, ECW requires that funds be used to expand comprehensive sexuality curriculums, defined by the UN to include the promotion of masturbation and normalization of homosexuality, and mandates that education to all recipients be “gender-responsive.”^{xxxvi} Similarly, UNESCO continues to promote vulgar and radical gender ideologies contrary to many domestic lawmakers and American families. In September 2022, a U.S. delegation participated in UNESCO’s Transforming Education Summit, which was created to institute a global curriculum comprised of comprehensive sexuality education and strategies to uproot “harmful” cultural norms. Leaders of global organizations urged

policymakers to begin sexuality education at the age of 2 to foster “children’s ideas of what’s possible for them beyond the binary.”^{xxxvii}

The U.S. donated \$48.3 million in 2023 to ECW.

Defund UNAIDS for their promotion of gender ideology and decriminalization of prostitution

UNAIDS is a collaboration between agencies to prevent the advance of HIV. However, its strategic plans go beyond what is agreed in General Assembly resolutions and promote controversial issues such as “sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).” In addition to the strategic plans, examples of multi-agency publications unilaterally promoting SOGI with the support of donor states and private foundations include the HIV and Transgender and Other Gender-Diverse People: Human Rights Fact Sheet Series (2021), which includes the following: “Gender-affirming care, including hormone therapy or affirmation surgery, if chosen, can help transgender and gender-diverse persons express themselves and be recognized as their self-identified gender. Where chosen, transgender and gender-diverse people should have access to good quality gender-affirming care and information.” Any American funding should be redirected through PEPFAR with PLGHA-type language.

Request 7: Oversight and Transparency: Mandate annual reporting requirements for all primes and sub-primes with information available to the public on [foreignassistance.gov](https://www.foreignassistance.gov)

To promote good governance through transparency and accountability, the Department of State and USAID also must be required to post public reports and foreign assistance data on their websites so that American taxpayers can see how the funds are used and prevent career USAID and State Department employees from shielding controversial programs from American taxpayers. Public access to detailed information on all implementing partners, including sub-awardees, would help ensure that funds are not mishandled.

To enable greater oversight and accountability, digital copies of educational materials and curricula, promotional materials, and implementation handbooks used to carry out U.S.-funded projects overseas should be made available to the public. The need for this is made evident by the results of research investigations that have uncovered potential violations of the Mexico City Policy/Siljander Amendment under USAID projects in Africa and elsewhere.^{xxxviii}

Request 8: Withhold funding that exports woke gender policies and threaten nations’ sovereignty

There should be no taxpayer funds made available for drag queen workshops, performances, or documentaries and organizations that offer counseling, promote, conduct, or subsidize sex change surgeries, and promote the use of medications or other substances to halt the onset of puberty or sexual development of minors, or otherwise promote transgenderism.

Additionally, funding should be denied for special representatives and special envoys within the

Biden Administration who were not expressly authorized by statute or confirmed by the Senate.

Prohibit Women’s Equality and Empowerment funding to the Gender Equity and Equality Fund (GEE), return the funding to women’s economic empowerment, and define what programs can be funded to elevate women and girls out of poverty. The GEE fund was initially started by Ivanka Trump for international women’s economic advancement under the title Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP). However, pro-abortion advocates and lawmakers were highly critical of W-GDP for its narrow focus on economic advancement, steering clear of abortion politics.

Funds made available by this act should not be used to partner with or fund organizations that pressure or recommend private companies to censor, filter, or suppress constitutionally protected speech by classifying any communications by citizens as “misinformation,” “disinformation,” or “malinformation.”

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