

September 8, 2011

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chair, Subcommittee on State/Foreign Operations  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy:

As in years past, your leadership will be essential to ensure that foreign assistance is as robust and effective as possible. We are concerned that the House State Foreign Operations bill includes a number of policy riders that will undermine the effectiveness of US foreign aid. We ask that you reject these riders in the Senate bill and in the final law.

There are three policy provisions in the House bill that are of particular concern:

1. **Federal Ban on Syringe Exchange:** The House SFOPs bill, for the first time, includes a legislative ban on syringe exchange programs. This restriction will severely compromise efforts to arrest the spread of HIV. Only 8% of injection drug users have access to prevention tools of any kind. The former Soviet States and Central Asia were the only regions where HIV epidemics expanded in 2010, largely due to injection drug use which spreads far more quickly than sexually transmitted infections. Outside sub-Saharan Africa, unsafe injection accounts for one in three new infections. Syringe exchange has been endorsed by every major medical and health association and more than eight federally-funded reviews have found that it decreases HIV infection without increasing drug use. Research shows that the greatest benefit comes from providing three core services simultaneously: syringe access, treatment for drug dependence, and ARV treatment for those who need it. It is essential that these programs be grounded in evidence-based practices.
2. **Legislative Reinstatement of Mexico City Policy “Global Gag Rule”:** The Global Gag Rule undermines the impact of international family planning programs by disqualifying some of the most effective and experienced providers of reproductive health care from receiving federal funding, often dismantling the only health services available in a community. Such restrictions would be unconstitutional if imposed on U.S. organizations. When the policy was in effect, its negative impact was felt around the world: clinics closed, outreach efforts were eliminated, and many women had no access to contraceptives. When in effect, this policy inflicted lasting harm on women and their families and every effort should be made to ensure it is not reinstated in the future, legislatively or otherwise.

3. **Defunding UNFPA:** UNFPA promotes the health and well-being of people and supports programs that enables couples to freely determine the timing, number and spacing of their children through access to voluntary birth control; helps women deliver healthy babies and survive childbirth; reduces the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections; and reduces harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). While USAID is the largest bilateral donor of international population assistance, UNFPA is the largest multilateral donor reaching over 75 countries where USAID does not work. The U.S. strategically provides assistance to women via both funding mechanisms ó thereby increasing its reach and impact on the lives of women, their families, and communities. Ending U.S. support for efforts that are making such a direct impact on improving the quality of life for some of the world's poorest citizens stands in the way of U.S. development objectives and U.S. national security interests.

We must also reiterate our concern with the House's proposed funding cuts to global health. As you know, these programs are part of our national security strategy. They help countries to become more stable, just and prosperous nations. While we appreciate the mandate to reduce the federal deficit, these programs are not large enough to have any meaningful impact on deficit reduction.

We stand ready to support you in your efforts to ensure these policy riders are not included in the Senate FY2012 State Foreign Operations bill and to eliminate them from the final law.

Sincerely,

A Brave New Day  
Advocates for Youth  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDS United  
American Humanist Association  
American Jewish World Service  
Americans for UNFPA  
amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research  
AMREF USA  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Better World Campaign  
CARE  
Caring Ambassadors Program  
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)  
Center for HIV Law and Policy  
Center for Reproductive Rights

Center for Women Policy Studies  
Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA)  
Chicago Recovery Alliance  
Community Outreach Intervention Projects, School of Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Drug Policy Alliance  
EngenderHealth  
Family Care International  
Feminist Majority  
Futures Group  
General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church  
Global Health Council  
Harm Reduction Coalition  
Hepatitis Education Project  
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA)  
Housing Works  
Human Rights Campaign  
International Planned Parenthood Federation  
International Women's Health Coalition  
IntraHealth  
Ipas  
John Snow, Inc.  
L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center  
Management Sciences for Health (MSH)  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)  
National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)  
National Council of Women's Organizations  
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC)  
North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN)  
Open Society Policy Center  
Partners In Health  
Pathfinder International  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Action International  
Population Connection  
Population Institute  
Prevention Point Philadelphia  
Project Inform  
PSI  
Public Health Institute  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Religious Institute  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Sierra Club

The AIDS Institute  
The AIDS Museum  
The C.H.O.W. Project  
The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF)  
The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)  
U.S. Positive Women's Network  
White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood  
WIN (Women's Information Network)  
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD)

cc: Majority Leader Harry Reid  
cc: Chairman of Appropriations, Dan Inouye  
cc: Ranking Chair of State, Foreign Operations, Lindsey Graham