



FACTSHEET:

# The Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act

## WHAT IS THE HELMS AMENDMENT?

Since 1973, the Helms Amendment has prohibited any U.S. foreign assistance from being used for “the performance of abortion as a method of family planning” and has been implemented as a total ban on U.S. foreign assistance funds being used for abortion services. The Helms Amendment is found in both the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and annually in the State Department, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill.

## HOW DOES THE HELMS AMENDMENT HURT THOSE NEEDING HEALTH CARE?

The Helms Amendment hinders millions of individuals around the world from being able to exercise their reproductive rights and deprives them of the health care they want and need. It reduces the availability of safe, legal abortion, denies health care providers life-saving equipment and training, and has resulted in the unwarranted censoring of critical health information. Annually, there are more than 35 million unsafe abortions worldwide that lead to millions of injuries and tens of thousands of preventable maternal deaths. The Helms Amendment exacerbates this crisis.

As the largest government funder of global health, including family planning and reproductive health services, the U.S. plays a vital role in improving public health around the world. The Helms Amendment is a clear and direct impediment to reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, empowering women and promoting gender equality, and upholding human rights. The U.S. should use its foreign assistance to provide access to quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services for all people, which includes safe, legal and accessible abortion. ***It is time to repeal this harmful policy and allow the use of U.S. funds to support safe abortion services worldwide.***

## WHAT DOES THE ABORTION IS HEALTH CARE EVERYWHERE ACT DO?

**Findings** – The bill catalogues the extensive harm to people worldwide caused by the Helms Amendment. It also details the liberalization of abortion laws and policies around the world in recent decades and the health and economic benefits of ensuring that all people who need abortion care have access to safe abortion services. The impact of repealing the Helms Amendment and the number of maternal deaths and unsafe abortions avoided are also detailed.



**Statement of Policy** – It would be a policy of the U.S. Government that:

- Safe abortion is a critical component of comprehensive maternal and reproductive health care and should be included as part of foreign assistance programs funded by the United States government.
- Safe abortion is to be made widely available and integrated with other types of health care.
- The United States Government should work to end unsafe abortion and promote safe abortion services by providing funding and collaborating with affected governments and service providers.

**Repeal and Replace Authorizing Language** – The Helms Amendment provision would be removed from the Foreign Assistance Act and replaced with proactive language stating that U.S. funding shall be used to provide comprehensive reproductive health care services and information including the provision of abortion services, training, and equipment.

The **Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act** repeals and replaces this language in the authorizing bill. Separate action will be needed to remove the language from the annual State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

## ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS (118<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS)

The [\*Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act\*](#) is endorsed by a diverse coalition of **more than 185 organizations** including Advocates for Youth, American Jewish World Service, Catholics for Choice, Center for Reproductive Rights, Fòs Feminista, Guttmacher Institute, International Center for Research on Women, Ipas, Open Society Policy Center, PAI, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Population Connection Action Fund, and Population Institute.

More information, including a full list of endorsements, can be found at [www.repealhelms.org](http://www.repealhelms.org)