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COALITION INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO GUARANTEE WOMEN ABROAD ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

SCHAKOWSKY SAYS LAW IS NEEDED IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S ANTI-CHOICE AGENDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined a coalition of House and Senate members to introduce the Global Democracy Promotion Act of 2001. The lead sponsors of the legislation are Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

Schakowsky said that this legislation would permanently repeal the "global gag rule," reinstated by President George Bush on his first full day in office. The policy under the Clinton Administration, which President Bush has now reversed, increased international family planning assistance while allowing international organizations to use their own resources - not U.S. taxpayer dollars - for counseling or abortion services. By reinstating the global gag rule, organizations that receive U.S. dollars for family planning services will not be permitted to use their own money to provide abortion services. The United States currently provides \$425 million a year to more than 400 international family planning organizations.

Schakowsky said, "President Bush told America that he signed the Executive Order to stop taxpayer dollars from being used by international organizations to pay for abortions. America beware: that is not true. What Bush really stopped was life-saving medical advice and family planning services to millions of women living in the poorest countries on earth."

She added that since 1973, no U.S. dollars have been used to pay for abortions. She indicated, however, that this Administration, through incremental steps, is undermining a woman's access to a legal abortion and turning back the clock on women's health and freedom in this country and around the world.

"I was surprised that George W. Bush, the 'compassionate conservative', would use his first working day in office to attack the most vulnerable women in the world. He doesn't seem to understand that his action will actually increase abortions. The Global Democracy Promotion Act of 2001 is needed to save women's lives," Schakowsky added.