

JANUARY 23, 2001

BUSH DECLARES WAR ON WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS & THREATENS PUBLIC EDUCATION

"FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, THOSE OF US WHO SUPPORT WOMEN'S RIGHTS, PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND FAIR ECONOMIC POLICES WILL NEED TO FIGHT BACK"

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today issued the following statement on President Bush's action to reinstate the global "gag" rule on family planning and his education plan.

"The majority of voters rejected President Bush's agenda during the campaign in which he lost the popular vote by more than 500,000 votes. Yet he acts as if he received an overwhelming mandate to govern. He did not."

"This 'compassionate' man, on the first Monday of his administration, declared war on women's reproductive rights and, by doing so, began the process of stripping away a woman's legally protected right to choose. He will have plenty of help from his anti-choice Attorney General-designate John Ashcroft and HHS Secretary-designate Tommy Thompson.

"The Bush administration claims that restoring the global gag rule would stop U.S. dollars from being used to pay for abortions. They know better. That is not the case. This punitive rule simply says that international family planning groups that receive U.S. dollars can not use their own funds to provide abortion services or to even counsel women about abortion. The true impact of this policy will be more abortions because millions of women across the world will not have access to life saving medical advice and family planning services that they so desperately need."

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"And today, he proposed his education plan that clearly threatens our nation's commitment to public education. His education agenda promotes vouchers and federal funds being used to pay tuition for private and parochial schools. The voters in California and Michigan overwhelmingly rejected statewide voucher initiatives. And the majority of parents in the United States also reject this irresponsible scheme.

"Bush has shed his moderate cloak and is now showing his true colors. He will stop at nothing to advance his 'conservative' agenda of overturning Roe v. Wade, enacting school vouchers, and soon, a tax cut that will benefit the wealthy and will put us back on the road to deficit spending and trickle down economics.

"Given the proposals of the of the first two days, I shutter to think what the next two weeks or two months will be like. For the next four years, those of us who support women's rights, public education, and fair economic polices will need to fight back."