



The Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)

The *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act of 2020* will:

REPEAL the Helms Amendment

REPLACE it with a policy supporting U.S. funding for safe abortion services worldwide

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 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 Agencies Appropriations bill.

HOW DOES THE HELMS AMENDMENT HURT THOSE NEEDING ABORTION CARE?

The Helms Amendment hinders millions of individuals around the world from being able to exercise their reproductive rights and deprives them of the 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 reproductive 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 past time to repeal this harmful policy and to allow U.S. funds to be used to support safe abortion services worldwide.***



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

Findings – The bill catalogues the extensive harm caused by the Helms Amendment to people worldwide; details the liberalization of abortion laws and policies around the world in recent decades; and specifies the health and economic benefits of ensuring that everyone who needs abortion care can access safe abortion services.

Statement of Policy – The bill would create 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 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* replaces the Helms Amendment 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:

The ***Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*** is endorsed by more than 115 organizations, including Advocates for Youth, American Jewish World Service, Catholics for Choice, Center for Reproductive Rights, CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity), the Guttmacher Institute, International Center for Research on Women, Ipas, International Women's Health Coalition, NARAL Pro-Choice America, Open Society Policy Center, PAI, Population Connection Action Fund, Population Institute, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

More information can be found at www.repealhelms.org.