

## Global Gag Rule Disadvantage

The thesis behind this disadvantage is that the US has a global gag rule - any organization or country that receives US aid can not aid or educate women about abortion. Their plan gives aid to an organization that can no longer provide information about abortion. This disad might work well against FGM cases that have a women rights advantage coupled with a agent counterplan - that way you still get solvency but avoid this disad.

### A. Uniqueness

## **African governments are modeling U.S. restrictions—it is stamping out reproductive health care within Africa**

**Sai, 04** Advisor to the President on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, in Ghana (Frederick, "International Commitments and Guidance on Unsafe Abortion," African Journal of Reproductive Health, Vol. 8, No. 1, April, 2004 pp. 15-28, Database: Bioline International)

Finally, we must take into consideration the US government's continued reversal on reproductive health policies. At the 1984 World Population Conference in Mexico City, the US government announced that it would withdraw funding from any organization that provided abortion services, even with funds from non-US sources. This policy became known as the Mexico City Policy or "Global Gag Rule." Nearly a decade later, in 1993, then President Clinton reversed the Mexico City Policy. However, in 2001, a mere two days after taking office, President Bush reinstated the Mexico City Policy. Over the past two years, the current US administration has withdrawn from previously made commitments concerning sexual and reproductive rights. Most recently, the Bush administration has announced its intention to extend the "Global Gag Rule," which has applied only to family planning funding, to also include US government funds given for maternal and child health and for HIV/AIDS programmes.

These Bush administration policies, which amount to the export of domestic debates and policies, also have the effect of **undermining international consensus-building processes such as ICPD.** By withdrawing from, and flip-flopping on, previously agreed upon international agreements, they lessen the hard won effects of these processes and **provide African and other governments with an excuse to also not respect them.** These policies also endanger the health and lives of women across Africa, and a study examining its effects is forthcoming from Ipas and Population Action International.

B. Link

Their plan gives US money which restricts organization from spending money on abortion

C. I/L This forces organization to limit its activities to help women's rights and reproductive health. Toaston [Their NGO] can no longer help fund womens clinics where abortions are performed.

**The gag rule has a chilling effect on any abortion services—NGOs are unsure of what is or isn't allowed and overcompensate.**

Center for Reproductive Rights, 2000

(October 2K. "The Bush Global Gag Rule: A Violation of International Human Rights," [http://www.reproductiverights.org/pub\\_idx\\_uspolicy.html](http://www.reproductiverights.org/pub_idx_uspolicy.html).)

The global gag rule is also likely to have a chilling effect on legal abortion-related activities that are technically "permitted" under the global gag rule, as occurred when the former Mexico City Policy was in effect.<sup>90</sup> In other words, women seeking abortions that are exceptions under the global gag rule (e.g., if they have been victims of rape or incest, or if their life is endangered by the pregnancy) may be turned away because of misinterpretation of the global gag rule. In addition, the provision of post-abortion care—which is explicitly allowed—such as treatment for illness or injury due to unsafe abortions, is being curtailed because entities fear jeopardizing their funding through any association with abortion. The equipment for providing post-abortion care is the same as that used for early abortion services, and organizations are afraid of having their funding terminated if they even have such equipment available for their health care providers. Center for Reproductive Rights attorneys have heard reports from local NGOs that in Bolivia, the Ministry of Health—which technically is not even covered by the global gag rule—has indicated that it will no longer endorse life-saving care for women suffering complications from illegal, unsafe abortions as a direct result of the global gag rule.<sup>91</sup> Health-care providers also may be reluctant to dispense emergency contraception—which acts to prevent pregnancy and is not an abortifacient—because of the global gag rule. The Bolivian NGOs reported that their government suspended efforts to permit distribution of emergency contraception because of the global gag rule.<sup>92</sup> The result of the global gag rule will be increased numbers of unwanted pregnancies and still more desperate women turning to illegal, dangerous abortions.

D. Impact:

## 1. Gag Rule Bad—Women's Rights

**The gag rule undermines women's rights globally.**

Center for Reproductive Rights, October 2K. "The Bush Global Gag Rule: A Violation of International Human Rights," [http://www.reproductiverights.org/pub\\_idx\\_uspolicy.html](http://www.reproductiverights.org/pub_idx_uspolicy.html).

Through foreign assistance, the United States has helped improve the status of women, including their role as participants in democratic decision-making. Numerous provisions of U.S. foreign assistance legislation, including those which set forth the principle purpose of bilateral development assistance, require the United States to support the enhancement of women's status and participation in civil society.<sup>52</sup> In 1974, USAID established the Women in Development office "to help ensure that women participate fully, and benefit equally, from U.S. overseas development assistance."<sup>53</sup> USAID announced the Women's Legal Rights Initiative at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995 and emphasized the need to ensure women's legal status and promote their participation in social and economic life.<sup>54</sup> The global gag rule disproportionately impacts women's groups, many of which receive funding from USAID for projects related to reproductive health care, maternal and child survival, and voluntary family planning. These groups, as the "front line" of the women's health movement, observe firsthand the effects of illegal, unsafe abortion and are often called upon to participate in their countries' deliberations about abortion law reform. If the United States is committed to decreasing women's marginalization, it should eliminate the global gag rule, which undermines women's rights to reproductive self-determination and to question their countries' abortion laws. The United States cannot have it both ways—supporting women with one hand and silencing them with the other. It is imperialistic and hypocritical for the United States, a country where women have the right to obtain information about safe, legal abortion in most circumstances, to "gag" women and women's organizations abroad.

## 2. Gag rule causes women to die

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Unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortion and resulting high levels of maternal mortality continue to cause irreparable harm to women in Africa, their families, communities and societies. Close to 100 African women die everyday, and many more are injured as a result of unsafe abortion. Indeed, unsafe abortion is a common experience in Africa. A WHO expert recently estimated that on average, each African woman will experience seven unsafe abortions in her reproductive lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Young women, including adolescents, suffer disproportionately, with 40% of all unsafe abortions occurring in women between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Yet these premature deaths and injuries are easily preventable if safe effective technologies for contraception and pregnancy termination are available and utilised,