Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

As you finalize the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, we write to request the maintenance of language to permanently repeal the Mexico City Policy, also known as the Global Gag Rule. Your support for this important policy priority, included in the House and Senate bills, is critical.

As a global health leader, our nation’s investments in global health programs have a significant and sustained impact. In fiscal year 2021, U.S. international family planning and reproductive health assistance made it possible for 27.2 million women to receive contraceptive services, as well as prevented 12 million unintended pregnancies including 4.5 million unplanned births and 4 million abortions, the majority of which are provided in unsafe conditions. U.S. investments in international family planning also prevented 19,000 maternal deaths.¹ These numbers improve consistently and they are a triumph of U.S. leadership in global health. But this impact is blunted and oftentimes reversed by the Mexico City Policy. This harmful policy reduces access to vital global health programs including contraceptive information and services. It also increases the number of abortions performed, most in unsafe conditions. The Mexico City Policy fragments public health systems that are forced to limit their services in order to continue receiving desperately needed U.S. assistance, and it forces the U.S. to abdicate its role as a global leader in support of women’s health and rights.

When President Biden rescinded the Mexico City Policy implemented under the Trump Administration, he restored assistance to global health programs that serve the most vulnerable and hardest to reach populations. President Biden’s actions also allow health care systems to start recovering from four years of a dangerous policy that parses health care provision and denies access to lifesaving treatments to women, girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals.

Unfortunately we cannot flip a switch and immediately recover from the effects of such a dangerous policy. New research from the Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities in Nepal demonstrates the difficulties in rescinding this policy.² Despite the policy being revoked in January, communicating the policy change to program implementers can be slow. As the report details, "most of the stakeholders... did not receive formal communications about the revocation of the policy from concerned organizations such as their central office or headquarters or US funding agency, such as USAID."

¹ https://www.guttmacher.org/just-numbers-impact-us-international-family-planning-assistance-2021
The Mexico City Policy undercuts access to voluntary and comprehensive family planning and reproductive health services and limits our efforts to end preventable maternal and child deaths, reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV and combat gender-based violence. Permanently repealing the policy is also fundamental to our broader development goals, including women’s economic empowerment by increasing women’s ability to access education, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as creating a healthier, more sustainable environment.

We urge you to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to permanently repeal the Mexico City Policy. Since it first went into effect in 1985, this partisan policy has been instated and rescinded, to the detriment of the most vulnerable people in the world. It is time to put an end to this deadly cycle. We urge you to prioritize the full and permanent repeal of the Mexico City Policy in the FY 2022 appropriations bill. We cannot let this moment pass us.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator
Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on  
Communications, 
Technology, Innovation, and 
the Internet

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

Mark Kelly  
United States Senator

Raphael G. Warnock  
United States Senator

Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator