

July 11, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
374 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
2470 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Diaz-Balart, and Ranking Member Lee:

We, the undersigned, write to express our deep concern of the House Fiscal Year 2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs bill. The steep cuts, elimination, and backsliding of various programs relating to gender, family planning, women, peace and security, gender-based violence, LGBTQI+ rights, and women's economic empowerment will have dire consequences for communities globally and set back years of global leadership to advance gender equity and equality. Moreover, we are alarmed at language that would allow for the politicization of already appropriated funding to be stymied by bad-faith requests.

We strongly support increased investments to advance gender equality which is essential to protecting national security, reducing poverty, and promoting human rights globally. Evidence has demonstrated that it will take the world nearly 300 years to achieve gender equality unless action is taken immediately to close gaps and avoid losing decades of progress in areas like girls' education, combating infectious diseases, ending child marriage, and reducing maternal and child deaths.

The cuts proposed in this bill would have serious implications for economic development, global health, humanitarian, and peace-building efforts and would hinder the effectiveness of all other foreign operations investments. Removing references to "gender," and censoring discussions of systemic sexism and racism runs the risk of curbing services and support to many marginalized communities, and harming programs that have been proven to be both evidenced-based and efficient. As part of the shortsighted and harmful elimination of funding for the UN, eliminating funding for the joint program on child marriage in over a dozen of the countries with the highest prevalence and burden of child marriage, girls and their children will be trapped in a cycle of poverty and the countries they live in will continue to be reliant on foreign assistance. The proposed cuts to international family planning/reproductive health, along with the bill's ban on funding for UNFPA and attempts to impose harmful policy riders, would have a devastating impact on access to care for women and couples around the world and undermine efforts to reduce

preventable maternal deaths. Finally, we are deeply concerned by attacks on long-standing programs that reduce violence, stigma, and discrimination against those in the LGBTQI+ community. Cutting funding for these programs will only reinforce already existing disparities, while adding anti-LGBTQI+ policy riders to evidence-based and effective foreign assistance programs will create a chilling effect on programs that are meant to serve vulnerable populations.

Gender equality is a matter of justice and human rights and a fundamental prerequisite for global stability and sustainability. This bill sends a dangerous message about U.S. foreign policy priorities and seriously diminishes U.S. global leadership on gender equity and equality and the health, rights, and empowerment of women and girls.

Sincerely,

ACDI/VOCA

Advocates for Youth

American Jewish World Service

Amnesty International USA

AVAC

CARE USA

Catholics for Choice

ChildFund International

Council for Global Equality

Equimundo

Fòs Feminista

Futures Without Violence

Global Justice Center

Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation

Guttmacher Institute

Heartland Alliance International

Human Rights Campaign

International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law (IANGEL)

International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

International Center for Research on Women

IPAS

IPPF

NARAL Pro-Choice America

Nonviolent Peaceforce

Outright International

Oxfam America

Pacific Forum International

PAI

Plan International USA

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Population Connection Action Fund

Population Council

Population Institute
Save the Children
Tahirih Justice Center
The Hunger Project
Together for Girls
Too Young To Wed
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
White Ribbon Alliance
Women's Refugee Commission
Zonta International