

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 25, 2018

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

As you begin to address appropriations for Fiscal Year 2019, we write to thank you for your support for international family planning programs in last year's FY 2018 Omnibus and request your support to ensure strong funding levels for these programs in the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill. In particular, we urge you to fund international family planning and reproductive health programs at no less than \$622.5 million—including the restoration of \$37.5 million for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). We believe this would be an important step toward meeting the estimated \$1.5 billion U.S. share of the global need for these critical programs, which save lives, support our broader global health, development, and foreign policy priorities, and are ultimately cost-effective.

We are alarmed by the President's FY 2019 budget which proposes a 30% cut to the international affairs budget, including a 50% reduction in international family planning and reproductive health programs. As you know, funding for international affairs makes up less than one percent of the federal budget. Investments in development and diplomacy—including support for humanitarian programs, democracy and governance, disaster assistance, and global health—are the foundation for building a more peaceful, prosperous, and healthy world. We must maintain overall funding for the International Affairs Budget if we are to continue to make advancements on our development, humanitarian and diplomatic priorities.

Both adequate funding plus implementation of evidence-based policies are critical to ensuring successful global health and development programs. We oppose the Administration's executive memorandum imposing and expanding the Mexico City Policy on global health assistance, which threatens to undermine the effectiveness of these critical programs by excluding some of the most qualified health organizations which have the infrastructure, expertise and community trust in areas we must reach in order to achieve our global health goals. We further oppose the Administration's determination under the Kemp-Kasten Amendment to withhold U.S. funding for UNFPA. Inadequately funding bilateral and multilateral international family planning and reproductive health programs would further compound the harmful impact of the Mexico City

Policy and result in even greater gaps in access to services for some of the most vulnerable women, families, and communities around the world.

As a global health leader, our nation's investment in international family planning and reproductive health continues to have a significant and sustained impact. In FY 2017 U.S. international family planning and reproductive health assistance made it possible for 25 million women to receive contraceptive services, as well as prevented 7.4 million unintended pregnancies and 3.1 million abortions, the majority of which are provided in unsafe conditions. Furthermore, providing access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services strengthens our efforts to end preventable maternal and child deaths, reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and combat gender-based violence. It also supports our broader development goals, including women's increased access to education, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as creating a healthier, more sustainable environment.

It is critical that the United States continues to make a strong investment in international family planning and reproductive health programs. Despite the progress that has been made, an estimated 214 million women in developing countries want to prevent or delay pregnancy, but face significant barriers to using modern contraceptive methods. Additionally, 303,000 women die each year from largely preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, while many others suffer from pregnancy-related injuries, infections, and illnesses.

The Senate must also continue to demonstrate support for the critical role of UNFPA, which is the largest multilateral provider of family planning and reproductive health services. We remain deeply concerned about the Administration's determination under the Kemp-Kasten Amendment to withhold U.S. contributions to UNFPA, an organization which is working to promote human rights and combat coercive reproductive practices. This decision is unfounded, short-sighted and will have a harmful impact on some of the world's most vulnerable communities. The United Nations Population Fund works in more than 150 countries, often where United States Agency for International Development (USAID) does not operate family planning/reproductive health programs. The agency also plays a critical role in combating maternal mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistula, female genital mutilation, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS. In humanitarian crises and conflict affected areas, UNFPA has taken a lead role in responding to reproductive and community health needs. For example, UNFPA supports and operates the sole comprehensive maternity ward at the Zaatari refugee camp for Syrians in Jordan, where, as of late January 2018, more than 8,850 babies have been delivered safely. As the world continues to experience unprecedented health and humanitarian crises, supporting UNFPA's work is more important than ever.

We understand the Committee faces difficult budget choices and there are many priorities you must consider, but we believe our nation must continue to be a leader in providing these essential and cost-effective resources. Doing so will not only help millions of women, girls and families, but will also advance U.S. national security interests by promoting strong communities that are resilient to threats of poverty, instability and extremism.

We urge you to provide at least \$622.5 million for international family planning and reproductive health programs in the FY 2019 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. We appreciate your consideration and thank you for your leadership and continued support.

Sincerely,



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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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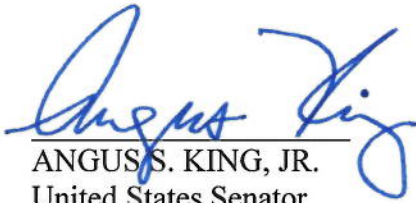
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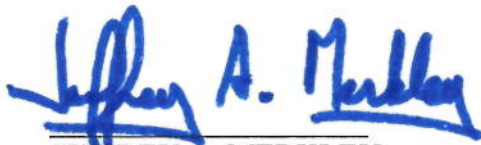
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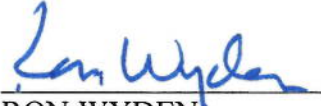
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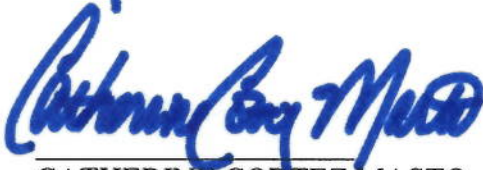
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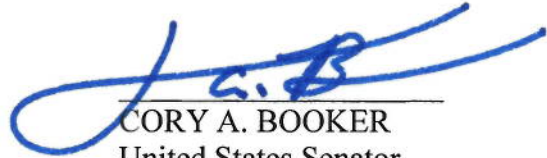
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