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Trump Administration Seeks to Further Restrict International Abortion Funding

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The Trump administration signaled on Monday that it wishes to further restrict federal funds going to international abortion providers. A proposed new rule would require foreign entities that receive aid through contracts with the U.S. Government to agree not to provide or promote abortion as a family-planning method.

The proposed legislation is an expansion of the “Mexico City Policy,” which blocks federal funding for international NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) that either promote or provide abortions. First enacted by Ronald Reagan in 1984, the Mexico City Policy has been a political seesaw ever since. Since it is an executive order, it can be rescinded when another president takes office. Bill Clinton rescinded the rule in 1993, George W. Bush re-instituted it in 2001 and Barack Obama again rescinded it in 2009.

Called a “global gag rule” by opponents, Donald Trump re-instituted the protocol in 2017 and now looks to expand upon it by including international groups that receive funding — even through military and government contracts — to agree not to promote or provide elective abortions. The new rule would deny funding for any global health organization — even those that don’t specialize in family planning — if they provide or counsel for abortions.

The protocol changes, dubbed [Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance \(PLGHA\)](#), can be read in the *Federal Register*.

Pro-life groups were ecstatic about the proposed rule change. “We thank President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for boldly defending life on the world stage. From day one they have championed initiative policies to protect unborn children and their mothers, as well as taxpayers,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of pro-life group Susan B. Anthony List. “This new proposed rule builds on that success, further preventing the big abortion industry from exporting abortion on demand around the world on American taxpayers’ dime.”

Opponents of the rule change argue that because of the abortion restrictions, groups that offer other services such as HIV treatment, family planning, tuberculosis testing and treatment, and maternal and child nutrition services have already been adversely affected by the Mexico City Policy.

“This administration is fully aware that the global gag rule is coercive and demonstrably hurts women and families worldwide,” read a statement from Zara Ahmed, the associate director of Federal Issues for the Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion think tank.

“By choosing to expand it even further, they are intentionally depriving people of live-saving and essential reproductive healthcare all over the globe in service of a manipulative ideological agenda.”

Planned Parenthood Global called the new rule “yet another unprecedented expansion of a harmful policy.”

But a State Department [report](#) issued in August found that the effect on the vast majority of health



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service grants issued by the government would be negligible since most participants agreed to the requirements.

“The majority of foreign NGOs that receive US global health assistance funding have accepted the terms of PLGHA in their awards. In total, only eight out of 1,340 prime awardees with awards in place between May 2017 and September 30, 2018, have declined to agree to the Policy, as well as a small portion of sub-awardees.”

So, it’s simple. Just stop providing and promoting abortions and the NGOs can have taxpayer money to treat whatever disease or malady that they’re willing and able to treat. Any NGO that refuses to comply with the rule is choosing abortion over all those other services that they claim are necessary.

What the Mexico City Policy really hurts is only the abortion industry. Because of the policy International Planned Parenthood Federation was [forced to close](#) 22 abortion mills in sub-Saharan Africa as of 2018. British abortion provider Marie Stopes International was also forced to shut down several African facilities.

The proposed new rule is just another small, incremental step in the battle to rid the world of the scourge of abortion. As soon as a Democrat gets back into the White House, the Mexico City Policy will almost certainly be rescinded quickly. But it’s another signal that President Trump — whose views on abortion were admittedly shaky before taking office — has become possibly the most pro-life president of the modern era.

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