



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 24, 2017

Trump Reinstates Mexico City Policy to Halt U.S. Support of Abortion in Foreign Countries

President Donald Trump has used an executive order to reinstate a policy first enacted by President Ronald Reagan, to bar federal money from going to foreign organizations that perform or promote abortion.



The policy was dubbed “the Mexico City Policy” because the United Nations International Conference on Population was held in Mexico City in 1984, the year Reagan directed that no American money could be used by a foreign non-governmental organization (NGO) to perform or promote abortion “services.” It seemed a logical extension of the so-called Hyde Amendment, named after the late Congressman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), which banned federal funds from paying for abortions.

Several international organizations saw their funding cut as a result of the policy, including the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia, and the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia.

The policy continued in effect through the administration of President George H.W. Bush, but was rescinded by President Bill Clinton on January 22, 1993. Clinton said the policy “undermined efforts to promote safe and efficacious family planning programs in foreign nations.” But President George W. Bush reinstated the policy on January 22, 2001, with his own executive order. Bush said, “It is my conviction that taxpayer funds should not be used to pay for abortions or advocate or actively promote abortion, either here or abroad.”

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After President Barack Obama came into office in 2009, he used his own executive order to reverse the policy once again.

At the time, the Gallup Poll found that this action by Obama was unpopular, saying, “Obama’s decision to reverse the prohibition on funding for overseas family-planning providers may be the least popular thing he has done so far.... Fifty-eight percent of Americans disapprove of Obama’s decision to lift this ban, while only 35 percent approve of it.”

Trump’s order comes one day following the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling *Roe v. Wade*, which asserted that state laws outlawing the practice of abortion were unconstitutional.

Republicans mostly applauded Trump’s order. “Life is a precious and sacred gift, and we must do all we can to protect it,” said Representative Michael Burgess, a Texas Republican who chairs the House’s



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health subcommittee. “I applaud President Trump for taking this important action and look forward to continuing to work together in advancing pro-life policies and protecting taxpayer dollars.”

Predictably, Democrats largely condemned the move. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), for example, accused Trump of “favoring ideological politics over women and families.” She promised to continue to “stand up to President Trump and Republican leadership in Congress who are intent on rolling back women’s access to reproductive healthcare.”

Trump’s actions, however, are a fulfillment of a campaign pledge to use his office to combat government funds from going to promote abortion.

Many of those gathering this past weekend in Washington, D.C., at state capitols, and even in foreign countries to march for “women’s rights,” carried signs favoring legalized abortion.

The Mexico City Policy was challenged in federal court in 1987 and 1988. Two separate court rulings upheld the policy of blocking U.S. federal dollars from going to foreign NGOs promoting abortion.

Two hundred and thirty-three members of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development petitioned Congress to overturn the policy, arguing that the policy “undermines internationally agreed consensus and goals.” Poul Nielson of the European Union (EU) said the EU was calling for the funding of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in order to “fill the decency gap,” which he argued had been created by the Mexico City Policy. The UNFPA has said it does not provide for abortion services, but some pro-life activists at the time accused the UNFPA of supporting the forced abortion policy of the Communist Chinese.

Trump is expected to be quite busy his first several days in office, using a flurry of executive orders to negate executive orders used by President Obama.



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