

GLOBAL GAG RULE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to President Bush's decision to reinstate the Mexico City restrictions on United States assistance to international family planning organizations abroad. I also urge the Bush administration to stop misleading the American people by stating that American taxpayer dollars are being used to pay for abortions overseas. The truth is that since 1973, under the HELMS amendment, the United States has prohibited foreign recipients of international family planning aid to use taxpayer funds to perform abortions. Despite this fact, however, President Bush's press secretary, in his defense of the global gag rule, has continued to state that American taxpayer dollars are being used to pay for abortion services. This is just downright wrong.

President Bush's decision to reinstate the global gag rule will deny United States family planning assistance to any organization that uses its own, non-United States taxpayer funds to provide abortion services or engage in reproductive choice advocacy. This would be unconstitutional in our own country.

Each year, approximately 600,000 women die from preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Ninety-nine percent of these women are in developing countries. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability among women aged 15 to 49 in the developing countries. Many of these deaths can be prevented by providing women with the means and the information to responsibly plan their families. United States funding provides family planning services and reproductive health education to families worldwide. So cutting funding for family planning diminishes access to the single most effective means of reducing the need for abortions.

Access to international family planning services is one of the most effective means of reducing the need for abortion and protecting the health of women and babies. Restricting funds to organizations that provide a wide range of safe and effective family planning services can only lead to more, not fewer, abortions. And limiting access to family planning results in high rates of unintended and high-risk pregnancy, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths.

It is crucial that women across the world have fundamental access to health care. Our support of international family planning helps save lives. It promotes women's and children's health and strengthens families and communities around the world. By

denying these vital services, we deny women access to methods of contraception, leading to higher risks of getting and spreading the HIV/AIDS virus. Funding for family planning will help curb the spread of sexually transmitted disease.

I urge the Bush administration to really correct their misstatements about international family planning aid. If not, it is our duty as Members of Congress to stand up and inform the American people that the President's executive order will restrict funds to organizations that provide a wide range of safe and effective family planning services to women in need. Millions of women around the world are begging President Bush to reconsider this decision. I implore the President to consider the deadly ramifications of his decision and really help poor women in need of basic education regarding their health care.

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AID TO INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING SHOULD CONTINUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in coalition with my colleagues to express my deep concern and opposition to President Bush's recent declaration to discontinue the aid in family planning and to reinstate the global gag rule. In essence, this global gag rule restricts foreign, nongovernmental organizations that accept international family planning funds from using their own non-U.S. money to provide legal abortion services or to lobby their own governments for changes in the abortion laws. While this gag rule is simply bad policy, its consequences are extremely severe, affecting the health of women and families in some of the poorest and neediest countries under some of the direst of circumstances. These consequences have not been fully or accurately disclosed to the American people. At its best, this global gag rule will serve to undermine a key priority of United States foreign policy, to promote Democratic values worldwide. At its worst, it will block access to contraceptives, increase the incidents of illegal abortion and lead to higher maternal mortality rates. Instead of presenting these facts to the American people, President Bush provided the press with an attractive sound bite explaining his recent decision: Quote, I am opposed to American taxpayer dollars being used to pay for abortions overseas, end quote.

The statement is grossly inaccurate. As we know, the global gag rule is totally unrelated to the issue of taxpayers' funds being used for abortions. In fact, since 1973, under the Helms

amendment, the United States has prohibited the use of taxpayer funds from being used for the performance of abortions by foreign recipients of international family planning aid. That is nearly 30 years.

Before he was elected, George W. Bush said he wanted to change the way America thinks about abortion and he claimed to be a uniter and did a wonderful adroit dance around this issue every time he was asked. Nothing in his campaign suggested that he intended to take this step which, frankly, according to his words, he seems not to understand what he has done.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to not only express my strong opposition to President Bush's efforts to reinstate the global gag rule, but I urge the Bush administration to correct their misstatements about international family planning aid. The American people deserve to know the truth.

IN OPPOSITION TO IMPOSITION OF THE GLOBAL GAG RULE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong opposition to President Bush's decision to reinstate the anti-democratic Mexico City restrictions on U.S. assistance to international family planning organizations. Also known as the Global Gag Rule, this provision prohibits nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive U.S. family planning assistance from using their own private non-U.S. funds to provide counseling, referrals, or services related to abortion or to engage in any effort to change the laws of their country governing abortion.

This harmful provision will not prevent abortions—desperate women will still find a way to obtain an abortion. But the restrictions will help to make abortions more dangerous and will inhibit access to family planning and reproductive health services to the world's poorest and most powerless women.

International family planning programs provide vital services that improve women's health and mortality, improve child survival rates, and increase women's educational opportunities and earnings. Hundreds of thousands of women in the developing world—many of whom are young adolescents—die from complications of pregnancy or inadequate reproductive health care. Few of these girls and young women have equal rights, much less the abstinence option viewed by some in this body as the solution to unwanted pregnancies. The Global Gag Rule will cost women's lives!

Let's remember that it has been against U.S. law to use USAID funds for abortion or to promote abortion since 1973. The Global Gag Rule is a means of denying to women in other, poorer countries services that are legal in the United States even when these services are paid for with private funds.

The Mexico City restrictions even go so far as to prohibit NGOs from using their own

funds to lobby their own governments to change laws regarding abortion. The restrictions force foreign NGOs to choose between desperately needed family planning funding and their right to speak out on an important social issue.

Under the Global Gag Rule, an NGO that dared to protest a lack of post-abortion care and the jailing of women and girls who have had abortion would lose U.S. family planning funds. If this NGO were the only family planning provider in a remote rural area—there are seldom multiple providers—then access to these services would be eliminated.

I find it incredible that the United States would use its enormous influence and power to curb free speech in the developing world. This is contrary to everything our country stands for. If the Congress attempted to pass such a provision affecting nonprofit agencies in the United States, it would be struck down as un-Constitutional.

In her Washington Post column of September 29, 2000, Judy Mann quotes Katherine Bourne, director of public affairs for Pathfinder, and international reproductive health organization, about the dangers of the Global Gag Rule.

[The gag rule] allows these organizations to provide care when a woman is dying from a botched abortion, but “they are not parsing out the legislative language,” Bourne says. “What they are hearing is: ‘The U.S. doesn’t like abortions. It endangers our funding. We’ll stay away from it entirely.’” . . . “In Peru, we work with eight different NGOs,” she says. “They tend to be [in remote areas] where there are no services. They are so nervous about it, they won’t stock equipment to do post-abortion life-saving care. They refer women to the public-sector hospital. That can make the difference between a woman going to a local clinic that is a half-hour away or going to a public hospital that is an eight-hour walk away. If you are hemorrhaging from an abortion, you could die within hours.”

All Americans want to see the number of abortions decline. The best and most proven method of reducing abortions is to provide family planning services. The Global Gag Rule will not reduce abortions, but it will reduce access to family planning and lifesaving reproductive health services to the detriment of the world’s poorest women and children.

NOMINATION OF SENATOR ASHCROFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Speaker’s kindness. I rise to join my colleagues who have spoken of their concern about the recent executive order that eliminates the opportunity of international family planning. My fellow colleagues have been extremely eloquent, and I would for a moment just like to expand that opposition to that decision by the administration to carry forth my opposition to the nomination of former Senator John Ashcroft to the position of Attorney General of the United States of America.

I would hope that this representation and opposition clearly will not be characterized as personal. I testified in the Committee on the Judiciary on my position, and it is a passionate position on the importance of the fundamental rights, civil rights, the right to vote, freedom of choice, all the law of the land. I might suggest to my colleagues that I believe that this USA Today, People for the American Way advertisement, captures my concern. Should a man who misrepresents the facts under oath be our Attorney General? And the facts are there. Again, it is not to personally suggest that Mr. Ashcroft may not believe in what he has said, but his actions speak louder than words.

When asked repeatedly whether he would be able to support *Roe v. Wade*, he indicated it was the settled law of the land but yet consistently throughout his Senatorial career, gubernatorial career and his other career, this individual showed that he was not in support of the law of the land, the Constitution of the United States, which gives a woman the right to choose.

In a decision dealing with voluntary desegregation in St. Louis, it was noted that in the first representation of his testimony he said the State was not liable and was not involved and, in fact, the State was involved and it was attributed to his position that caused this delay in a resolution of this desegregation order where the parties at hand voluntarily decided to resolve this.

His position as Attorney General or governor caused it to continue to be at odds, because he fought against the voluntary agreement.

Do we believe in integration in this country? Do the laws provide us the opportunity for civil rights? Yes. And I believe the actions of this nominee do not speak well for him being able to enforce the law of the land.

Might I suggest that several other items come to mind and that, of course, is one that many of us have heard over and over again, that is the nomination of Judge Ronnie White and the comments being made by Senator Ashcroft that he was pro-criminal or had a criminal bent when over 60 percent of the time Judge White agreed with the nominees of then-Governor Ashcroft in confirming the death penalty.

Might I read this insert by Congressman WILLIAM CLAY as he introduced Judge Ronnie White before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary upon which Senator Ashcroft said, I might cite one incident that attests to the kind of relationship that Judge White has with many and that is with a member of this committee Senator Ashcroft. When I recommended Judge White to the President for nomination and the President nominated him, one

of the first people that I conferred with was Senator John Ashcroft. At a later date, he told me that he had appointed 6 of the 7 members to the Missouri Supreme Court. Ronnie White was the only one he had not appointed. He said, meaning Senator Ashcroft, he had canvassed the other six, the ones that he appointed. They all spoke very highly of Ronnie White and suggested that he would make an outstanding Federal judge. So I think that this is the kind of person we need on the Federal bench. These were the confirmation hearings on Federal appointments, hearings before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary 105th Congress.

Yet on the floor of the Senate, Senator Ashcroft vigorously opposed Judge Ronnie White, for what reason we do not know; and this nominee came out of the Committee on the Judiciary twice victoriously. One wonders whether or not in his explanation that the reason he opposed him was his record, when his record was clear, Judge White’s record was clear. He was an independent justice who reviewed the facts and supported the facts and was well respected in his State.

Then we have the situation of Ambassador Hormel, who we have heard recently who has a different life-style, and because of a different life-style he opposed him.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for this unique opportunity to offer a few observations on the nomination of Mr. John Ashcroft for attorney general of the United States. As Martin Luther King once stated, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” That is why I am here today to speak out not only as a member of Congress, but as a citizen of our diverse and vulnerable nation.

The Senate is moving closer to taking final action on Mr. Ashcroft’s nomination. This causes me great anxiety that a growing number of Americans are demonstrating in every state of the Union.

Based on Mr. John Ashcroft’s voting record of aggressive opposition to women’s rights, civil rights, and the unfortunate handling of the nomination of Judge Ronnie White, the Senate Judiciary Committee and its colleagues should vote down his nomination for the sake of unifying America. The attorney general for the United States should support laws that protect all of America’s people. It is unfortunate that ratings by the Christian Coalition, the National Right to Life Committee, and the American Conservative Union show that throughout his six years in the United States Senate, John Ashcroft has been a consistent and reliable vote in opposing the certified law of the land.

Let me be absolutely clear. I am not questioning Mr. Ashcroft’s personal probity; I am vigorously questioning his suitability for the job for which he has been selected.

Mr. Ashcroft’s record on matters of race has been simply disappointing. According to the Washington Times, Ashcroft received a grade of ‘F’ on each of the last three NAACP report cards because of his anti-progressive voting record, having voted to approve only three of 15 legislative issues supported by the NAACP