

House Appropriations Committee Passes Bill Attacking SRHR Globally

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Yesterday, the Republican-controlled House Appropriations Committee made their global priorities clear when they passed the 2024 House State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOPs) budget. This spending bill is a striking cut for international family planning funding—shortchanging current funding levels by 24 percent—and would leave women, girls, and other marginalized communities around the world without sufficient funding for sexual and reproductive health care.

The House bill proposes to cap international family planning and reproductive health funding (FP/RH) at \$461 million and defund the United Nations Population Fund, resulting in a whopping \$146.5 million cut below the current funding levels of \$607.5 million. The newly passed budget will have devastating impacts on women and girls around the world in need of sexual and reproductive health services. Utilizing the methodology in Guttmacher Institute’s Just the Numbers, PAI calculated that compared to the current investment, this funding cut would result in an estimated 8.2 million women and couples losing access to contraceptive services, 2.7 million more unintended pregnancies, 4.7 million unplanned births, 4,700 more maternal deaths, and 894,000 more unsafe abortions.

In addition to shortchanging the family planning budget when funding levels were already falling far too short, the bill would codify the expanded Global Gag Rule, which prevents foreign NGOs from receiving global health assistance if they provide, counsel on, refer for, or advocate for abortion. The bill would also keep in place the 1973 Helms amendment, which prevents U.S. funds from being used to provide “abortion as a method of family planning” around the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed women and girls to increased levels of poverty and economic hardship, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), gender-based violence, and maternal deaths. In fact, gender equality is growing so distant as to be [300 years away](#), according to the United Nations (UN). Comprehensive funding from the U.S. is an [absolute prerequisite](#) for making meaningful progress on global gender equality. Still, while this goal faces rising threats, the House Appropriations Committee has chosen to consign women and girls to diminished access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care.

Speaking on the spending bill, Director of rePROs Fight Back Jennie Wetter said: “This proposed budget clearly shows that the well-being of women and girls around the world is not a priority for the House majority. These devastating cuts come on the heels of 13 years of flat funding for international family planning, which was already falling far short of what is needed to ensure universal access. This attack on reproductive rights would have real-life impacts on women and girls around the world. They would be prevented from accessing life-changing and life-saving health care, all to score political points. Now is the time for the Senate to step up and

show that they prioritize the rights of women and girls in their appropriations bills, because the women and girls of the world cannot wait.”