

FPAA's statement opposing the global removal of funding to reproductive services: Women's rights are human rights

[Family Planning Alliance Australia](#) (FPAA) opposes the Global Gag Rule, reinstated by US President Trump on Monday 23 January 2017, which prohibits international organisations from receiving US Aid if they provide, counsel, refer or advocate for abortion services.

This action will set a global agenda in restricting women's access to abortion and other reproductive and sexual health services. Marie Stopes International [1] has estimated that without US funding, the loss of services during Trump's first term, between 2017 and 2020, would result in:

- 6.5 million unintended pregnancies
- 2.2 million abortions
- 2.1 million unsafe abortions
- 21,700 maternal deaths

Restrictive laws do not stop women from having abortions. Instead, they make termination procedures unsafe, hidden and criminalised [2]. It leads to more irresponsible practices in back rooms and more maternal deaths.

This Rule infringes upon women's fundamental right to make informed decisions about their bodies and their health. This decision acts to restrict women's right to access safe and effective healthcare. In addition, it is also a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and runs counter to the Sustainable Development Goal 3.7 of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services [3, 4].

The Gag Rule has had detrimental impacts on the ability of nations globally, to provide a wide range of health services. Family Planning clinics across the world provide a wide range of health services, such as maternal and child health care, STI and HIV testing and counselling, cervical cancer screening, and contraceptive choices [5, 6]. The forced closure of these clinics due to the Gag Rule has left communities with little to no health care access.

FPAA recognises that this decision has wide reaching and damaging impacts. The oppression of women and the removal of autonomous decision making about their sexual and reproductive health has flow on social, economic and political impacts to the whole community.

Here in Australia, we're still advocating to have consistent and progressive laws for women accessing comprehensive reproductive and sexual health services, including abortion [7]. FPAA does not support President Trump's decision to reinstate the Gag

Rule and will continue to advocate for universal access to reproductive and sexual health for all.

Members of the FPAA and signatories to this media statement

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References

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2. Guttmacher Institute. *Restrictive laws do not stop women from having abortions*. [cited 2017 Jan, 25]; Available from: <https://www.guttmacher.org/infographic/2016/restrictive-laws-do-not-stop-women-having-abortions>.
3. United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [cited 2017 Jan, 25]; Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.
4. United Nations. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. [cited 2017 Jan, 25]; Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.
5. Planned Parenthood, *Coalition Statement Opposing the Global Gag Rule 2017*.
6. Gezinski, L.B., *The Global Gag Rule: Impacts of conservative ideology on women's health*. International Social Work, 2012. **55**(6): p. 837-849.
7. Family Planning Alliance Australia, *Access to abortion services in Australia: Position Statement*. 2016.