

THE GLOBAL
GAG RULE
IS GONE...
FOR NOW

Volume 53, Issue 1 March 2021



#### **President's Note**

hen Dr. Fauci gives us the all-clear and theaters finally reopen, what will you do if you see smoke when entering a facility? You'll pull the alarm, of course. That's the only humane and sensible reaction.

In 1968, Paul and Anne Ehrlich did just that with *The Population Bomb* when they warned that widespread famine would decimate humanity. Some tagged them as alarmists, alongside Rachel Carson, just as some call Greta Thunberg an alarmist today.

We avoided the worst immediate outcomes back then by sacrificing our precious atmosphere through the use of petrochemicals to boost crop yields. Yet the underlying driver remains the same: rapid population growth.

The Population Bomb was published less than a decade after the Great Famine in China, which took perhaps 30 million lives. And, as it was being written, some 1.5 million people in Africa were dying from famine. So, it's hardly surprising that hunger threats were front-and-center. At the same time The Population Bomb was released, Norman Borlaug and his team were laying the groundwork for the Green Revolution, for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970. In his acceptance speech, he

warned against complacency in terms of threats posed by population growth.

Yet, the Green Revolution led some to claim that population growth wasn't a problem and that *The Population Bomb* was a false alarm. But the evidence clearly shows that there was—and still is—a fire in our global theater. Its main cause, however, appears to be chemical in nature. Specifically, those higher crop yields that reduced famine and hunger are partly due to increased use of petrochemicals for fertilizers, insecticides, and greater mechanization.

Massive use of fossil fuel products is causing our planet to descend into climate chaos. Related to that, we're in the midst of the Sixth Extinction. Plus, nearly two-thirds of the people on earth may experience water scarcity at least one month each year. At the same time, we're adding 80 million people to the planet annually. Sounds like a true population crisis, doesn't it?

We need to listen to respected voices, including those in the Global South, who see the daily toll of misery and destruction directly related to rapid population growth. We live in alarming times, so we must still raise the alarm. Complacency is not our friend.

John Seager john@popconnect.org

#### Want to Have a Conversation About Population?

What do a longtime educator in the Alaskan bush, the former head of a national medical society, and a retired moose manager in Minnesota have in common? They're all longtime Population Connection members with whom I've had great conversations recently about how they came to be interested in population stabilization. If you'd like to share your own story with me or just discuss our issue, you can pick a time by going to **calendly.com/population/talk**. Or you can just email me at **john@popconnect.org**.

#### Volume 53, Issue 1 March 2021



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#### **Features**

"You Can't Just Remove the Damage of the Last Four Years"

By Kara Fox and Nicole Gaouette

Trump Left International Abortion Rights in Shambles, Activists Say. Can Biden Undo the Damage?

By Urooba Jamal



Cover Image: Melvine Ouyo, a Nairobibased reproductive health nurse and former clinic director at Family Health Options Kenya, lost funding due to Trump's Global Gag Rule. In May 2020, she founded Hope for Kenya Slum Adolescents Initiative, where she serves as Executive Director. (Photo: Lisa Shannon)

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#### **Editor's Note**

went for a [masked and distanced] walk with a friend at a local nature preserve last weekend, and it wasn't until we were getting back to our cars that I realized we hadn't talked about politics once. Instead, we talked about our jobs and our husbands, about the books we've recently read and the movies we've recently watched, about her children and my dogs. In other words, we had the mental freedom to think of and discuss things other than the words and actions of the man currently residing at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. What a relief.

Knowing that there's a grownup in the White House is a salve to the stressed souls of Americans across the country. It gives us the brain space to relax and let our president do his job without watching his every move, waiting for the next outrageous tweet or press conference or public temper tantrum. And it allows us to work toward pushing for new policies on and funding for voluntary family planning programs that will help to stabilize population, rather than having to spend all our time fighting against bad policies and funding cuts.

Since taking office, Joe Biden has rescinded the Global Gag Rule, restored funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), withdrawn the United States from the anti-choice Geneva Consensus Declaration, and begun the necessary steps to overturn the Title X Domestic Gag Rule. He's resumed U.S. support for the Paris Climate Agreement and reinstated over 100 U.S. environmental protections. He's working to make our immigration system rational in terms of the needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, and others who wish to become legal residents

of the United States and to find sensible paths to citizenship for the Dreamers who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

Despite all these wins, though, we must not return to the complacency that led to the predicament we found ourselves in for the past four years. We must learn to strike a balance between informed citizen and despondent doomscroller.

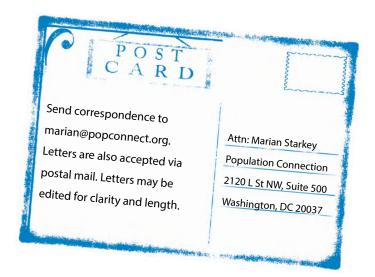
If you are looking for a way to stay engaged with us and our work now that the resistance to the Trump administration is over, there are still important things do be done. We now have a supportive majority in the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives, so we finally have a very good chance of passing the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights (HER) Act (S.142/H.R.556) to end the Global Gag Rule forever through congressional repeal. Passing the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act to repeal the Helms Amendment is a taller order, but a challenge has never stopped us from trying before!

And if you're interested in putting your efforts toward population activism, we've got plenty of opportunities for you to get involved with our staff and other Population Connection members, virtually—see page 12 for more information about that. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming online events!

Marian Starkey marian@popconnect.org

<sup>\*</sup> One who obsessively scrolls through bad news on their smartphone, even though it makes them feel terrible

#### **Letters to the Editor**



First of all, let me say that I very much appreciated your review of Matthew Yglesias' book *One Billion Americans: The Case for Thinking Bigger*. You appropriately and accurately point out and underscore the absurdity of the thesis.

However, I believe you could have and should have found fault with the disconcerting descriptor "Rust Belt." You used a footnote to explicate the realities of fertility rates. You could have used a footnote to highlight the denigrating quality of the term Rust Belt. As a native of Chicago, I find this phrase offensive and inaccurate. It has negative innuendo and imagery and is a product of a thoughtless media. I believe the term is used in a careless manner to add inaccurate texture. I know that you are not thoughtless, but maybe this barbed idiom is easily overlooked. I note that words such as West Coast, Mountain West, and South are used elsewhere in your magazine to identify other areas. I ask that pundits, journalists, authors, and others in the media limit the invidious term Rust Belt to those times when they are actually talking about rust. We of the Upper Midwest must unify and resist terms and categories that are inaccurate and/or demeaning. The term is hurtful (at least I am hurt by it). Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Dennis O. Vidoni

I appreciate everything that you folks at Population Connection do. The forbidden topic is sterilization of women. One of the best days of my life was when I got a tubal ligation, however, it took me being in my forties and having survived the death of my 16-year-old son to assure my doctor that I was 'serious'

about not wanting more children. Young women friends of mine who are absolutely sure they do not want children find it impossible to obtain a tubal ligation. We (they and I) find it ludicrous that their requests are disrespected based on their age and the disbelief that a woman would actually not want to procreate or have more children. These are smart, introspective women. They know their own minds. I understand the complexity of the issue of sterilization, however, when a woman asks that it be an option, she shouldn't need to prove her request or be patronized by those with the ability to deny her that avenue. You cover so many important topics—maybe this is one whose time has come? Discussion leads to possibilities.

Joanne Harrington

We subscribe to *Population Connection* magazine. You are the only people doing the work that really counts. As a lifelong environmentalist, writer, and former national media director for Greenpeace, my big gripe was that no one was paying attention to the critical issue of our time: overpopulation.

Neville Williams

I want to include a note about the Pop Facts infographic in the December 2020 issue of our magazine, since a couple of people wrote in with clarifying questions. We should have included percentage symbols next to the various bars in the charts we depicted. Leaving the symbols out was an unintentional oversight, and I apologize for any confusion that may have caused to our readers!

-Marian



## P AND PEACE

## O P U L

POPULATION GROWTH WILL BE AMONG THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE.

BY 2050...



THE GLOBAL POPULATION IS PROJECTED TO GROW 35% IN THE LEAST PEACEFUL COUNTRIES COMPARED TO A 2% DECLINE IN THE MOST PEACEFUL.

THE 40 LEAST PEACEFUL COUNTRIES WILL HAVE AN ADDITIONAL 1.3 BILLION PEOPLE AND WILL BE HOME TO MORE THAN HALF OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION.



80% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WILL LIVE IN COUNTRIES WHICH ARE IN THE BOTTOM HALF OF THE GLOBAL PEACE INDEX RANKINGS.



## AN ESTIMATED 2 BILLION PEOPLE

SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY. BY 2050, THIS FIGURE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO 3.5 BILLION PEOPLE.





## THERE IS NOW 60% LESS FRESH WATER

AVAILABLE PER PERSON TODAY THAN THERE WAS IN THE EARLY 1960S. THE POPULATION IS INCREASING FASTER THAN WATER AVAILABILITY.

## NATURAL DISASTERS DISPLACED 25 MILLION PEOPLE

IN 2019. THIS IS THREE TIMES HIGHER THAN THE 8.6 MILLION DISPLACED BY ARMED CONFLICT.



;

By Stacie Murphy, Director of Congressional Relations

#### U.S. Rejoins Paris Climate Agreement

Only hours after being sworn in as the country's 46th president, Joe Biden signed an executive order rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, from which Donald Trump had previously withdrawn. The agreement, signed by nearly 200 countries in December 2015, encourages countries to voluntarily commit to lowering their carbon emissions with the goal of keeping the total average global temperature increase to under two degrees above pre-industrial levels. Additionally, President Biden ordered federal agencies to begin the process of reinstating the more than 100 environmental regulations weakened or rolled back by the previous administration.

#### To Slow Climate Change, the Wealthy Must Cut Their Carbon Footprint

The wealthiest 1 percent of the world's population is responsible for twice the carbon emissions of the bottom 50 percent, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment The Programme (UNEP). released in December 2020, studies the so-called "emissions gap" between wealthy and poor countries, as well as the ways disparities in individual lifestyles contribute to overall emissions levels within countries. It concludes that broad, systemic change—at both the societal and individual level-is needed to meet the emissions goals set forth in the Paris Climate Agreement. To close

the emissions gap and stay under 1.5°C of warming, wealthy individuals must reduce their emissions by a factor of 30, while the poorest 50 percent of people could triple their current emissions.

#### Study Finds 1 Percent of People Responsible for Half of All Aviation Emissions

A new study published in the Global Environmental Change journal found that aviation emissions are heavily concentrated among a tiny sliver of the population. In 2018, only around 11 percent of people traveled by air, with no more than 4 percent doing so internationally. The most frequent travelers-no more than 1 percent of global population—are responsible for an estimated 50 percent of all aviation emissions. Individuals using private air travel—a relatively tiny number of extremely wealthy individuals-may be responsible for up to 7,500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. Additionally, the study found that because large segments of aviation emissions are not covered by policy agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol or the Paris Agreement, wealthy countries with higher numbers of frequent travelers should consider travel disparities in their internal emission mitigation efforts.

#### States Take Divergent Paths on Abortion Access

Republican state lawmakers in Arkansas have filed legislation that, if enacted, would amount to a total abortion ban in that state—a move they have explicitly said is meant to trigger a court challenge that could ultimately give the Supreme Court an opportunity to overturn *Roe v. Wade.* Multiple states have attempted to enact restrictions over the last several years, but with the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—a longtime champion of reproductive rights—the ideological balance of the Court has changed. Antichoice activists hope that Ginsburg's replacement, the more conservative Amy Coney Barrett, will provide the decisive vote in striking down Roe.

Meanwhile, Massachusetts has become the latest state to enact affirmative protections for abortion, with the state legislature overriding a veto from Governor Charlie Baker to pass the ROE Act, which will allow abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy in cases of a fatal fetal anomaly and in instances when a physician deems it necessary "to preserve the patient's physical or mental health." It also lowers the age at which teens can seek an abortion without permission from a parent or a judge from 18 to 16.

## Teen Pregnancy Costs Latin America Billions Each Year

A new United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) study of six Latin American countries indicates that the region's high teenage pregnancy rate exacts an enormous economic cost—an average of more than \$1.2 billion per country each year. The research takes into account not

only direct health care expenditures, but also the loss of earnings due to reduced educational attainment and lower labor market participation. The study found that those who gave birth during adolescence were three times less likely to obtain a university degree than those who did not, earned 24 percent less in annual income, and were more likely to experience unemployment and chronic poverty. Researchers further found that preventing adolescent pregnancies could reduce government spending on welfare programs by between 60 and 72 percent.

#### South Korea's Population Declines for the First Time

For the first time in the country's recorded history, the population of South Korea has declined from one year to the next. Census data found that on December 31, 2020, there were 51,829,023 people in the country, down 20,838 from the same date a year earlier. Births decreased by 10.65 percent over that period, while deaths were up by 3.1 percent. The total fertility rate stands at 0.9 births per woman, well short of the replacement rate of 2.1. Forecasters expect it to fall further.

Demographers in South Korea have long warned of the economic and social consequences of an aging population with too few younger workers to support older retirees. The South Korean government has sought to counter the declining birth rate in recent years by offering incentives to couples to have more children, but the initiatives have seen little success.

Multiple trends have combined to make larger families unattractive, including challenging economic conditions for young adults and a still-patriarchal culture that disproportionately saddles women with the burdens of childrearing. In a sign of how deeply entrenched these norms are, suggestions posted to a government website in 2019 encouraged pregnant women to plan ahead for their husbands' comfort after the new arrival by making sure there were meals on hand, since husbands are "not good at cooking." It also suggested that hanging a dress in a small size somewhere visible would encourage new mothers to quickly lose their baby weight. Several of the suggestions were removed following public outcry.

#### Poland Enacts Near Total Ban on Abortion

In late January, after months of public protests and calls for repeal, Poland enacted a law passed in October 2020 banning abortion in cases of fetal abnormality. The country already had one of the most restrictive laws in Europe, and the new measure means that rape, incest, and life endangerment are now the only permissible reasons for abortion. Only 1,100 legal terminations were performed in 2020, virtually all due to fetal malformations, though women's rights groups have estimated that between 80,000 and 120,000 Polish women seek abortions abroad every year. The ruling Law and Justice Party, which has drawn international criticism for its increasingly autocratic behavior, has championed the

law as in keeping with "traditional values," despite the fact that public opinion polls show majorities opposed additional restrictions.

#### In Major Step Forward, Argentina Legalizes Abortion

In December, Argentina became the largest country in Latin America to permit abortion when its legislature voted to legalize the procedure. Abortion will now be free in public hospitals and available for any reason through the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Later procedures are still subject to some restrictions. Additionally, in late January, the government announced it would drop criminal charges against those accused of having abortions prior to the passage of the new law.

Only three other countries in Latin America—Cuba, and Guvana, Uruguay—allow abortion without restrictions during the early weeks of pregnancy, though the procedure remains common throughout the region. Researchers say that hundreds of thousands of clandestine abortions have taken place every year in Argentina alone, and the country's Health Ministry says that in 2016—the most recent year for which data are available-around 40,000 women were hospitalized for complications from unsafe abortions. The Access to Safe Abortion Network, an Argentinian activist group, says that at least 65 women died of unsafe abortions between 2016 and 2018.

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If you'd like to join the President's Circle, or believe you should be recognized as a 2020 member and don't see your name, please contact Jennifer Lynaugh at jennifer@popconnect.org. **Thank you for your support!** 

# VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR OUR MEMBERS

By Natalie Widel, Director of Digital Marketing

Our Membership Relations team is rolling into 2021 with a whole slate of virtual events planned to help our members learn more about population issues, connect with one another, and stay engaged with Population Connection.

#### FILM SCREENING, PANEL DISCUSSION, AND BOOK CLUB!

or our first event of the year, we screened Terry Spahr's new documentary film, 8 Billion Angels. Participants had several days to watch the hour-long feature "ondemand," culminating with a panel discussion hosted by Communications Manager Hannah Evans. Filmmaker (and Population Connection member!) Terry Spahr took part, as did member, activist, and PopEd trainer (whew!) Kelley Dennings, who is the Population and Sustainability Campaigner for Center for Biological Diversity.

Nearly 750 people signed up to screen the film, and 100 joined us for the live panel event. Due to the incredible popularity of this screening and the positive reviews we received, we will plan to host a second screening of this film later in the year.

We also kicked off the "Population Connection Page Turners" book club! Marian Starkey, Population Connection magazine editor and Vice President for Communications, led a discussion on our first book of the year: Matthew Yglesias' contentious *One Billion Americans: The Case for Thinking Bigger*. Stay tuned for future book club opportunities.



Our Membership Relations team will be hosting a number of virtual events in April to celebrate Earth Day. Please visit **popconnect.org/EarthDay** to join in!

We encourage you to contact us at **engage@popconnect.org** with questions on how to join any of our events, as well as to offer your own ideas for future events. We hope to see you virtually in 2021!

#### PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE MEMBER PROFILE: JOANN SIVLEY RUPPERT

By Shauna Scherer, Vice President for Marketing and Development, and Lee Polansky, Senior Director of Executive Initiatives and Special Projects

thought long and hard (for several decades!) before she took the leap and became a member of Population Connection. Not only that, she joined the President's Circle of particularly generous donors.

We asked JoAnn, "After all those years of following the organization, why did you ultimately join us?" She said that she had long been aware of the problems arising from rapid population growth. For many years, while she lived in Virginia and California, she worked with children in foster care and assisted with adoptions. She'd "seen children who weren't wanted, who were abused, neglected, or just abandoned emotionally. Having kids is the hardest job anybody ever has, if they do it right." And, she added, "It's been part of my thinking for 40 to 50 years" that people are obligated to help others make the right choices for themselves and their families.

JoAnn began to read more about climate change and started "to get truly serious about that." She said "it was one more thing that was important to me about population growth." She read many books on the topic, but Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction:* An Unnatural History made the biggest impression. "Even though I don't have kids, I love this planet, and I want it to continue to be the beautiful place that we're experiencing in our lives."

JoAnn, who has a psychology background, and her husband, Steve, a geologist, live in New Mexico. They enjoy traveling abroad and especially appreciate putting JoAnn's French to work in France. She's been lucky to join Steve on his geological research cruises to China and Peru with the University of Hawaii's Institute of Geophysics. They have also enjoyed visiting the Galapagos Islands, Mexico, Canada, and many parts of Europe.

JoAnn and Steve enjoy the unusual hobby of mushroom hunting—so much so, that they named one of their three dogs Chanterelle, which is a delicious wild mushroom that's often yellow or golden colored. Halle and Remy complete their Labrador Retriever family. One of JoAnn's Labs was expecting a litter of puppies when we spoke—JoAnn planned to donate one pup to



Freedom Service Dogs of Denver, Colorado, an organization that provides dogs to children and adults with autism, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and post-traumatic stress.

These days, JoAnn's philanthropy focuses on Population Connection, as well as Planned Parenthood and Rocky Mountain Conservancy. She's also working closely with Compassion & Choices in New Mexico to help pass the state's Death with Dignity Act. JoAnn is all about personal choices, saying that "death with dignity" is yet "another issue where choice should be available to people." And, she added, "At this point in my life, being able to contribute to the causes that I feel so strongly about is such a gift."

We'd like to extend our thanks to JoAnn for her generosity and dedication to our mission, as both a member of our President's Circle and our ZPG Society—a legacy society honoring the commitment of those who include Population Connection in their will or trust. We're truly fortunate that JoAnn jumped on board with us last year, and we deeply appreciate her dedication to achieving our mission.

If you'd like to learn more about making an investment in Population Connection's programs, please contact us at **giving@popconnect.org**.





## "You Can't Just Remove the Damage of the Last Four Years"

Reproductive rights groups cautiously welcome Biden's reversal of Trump's abortion access restrictions

By Kara Fox and Nicole Gaouette | Originally published by CNN on January 30, 2021



Above: President Joe Biden, with Vice President Kamala Harris, signs a memorandum rescinding the Global Gag Rule, in the Oval Office of the White House, on January 28, 2021. (Photo by Mandel Ngan/AFP via Getty Images)

more than four years, countries that rely on American foreign aid have been reeling from the profound impact that Donald Trump's reinstatement of the Mexico City policy has had on women. The policy, known as the "Global Gag Rule" among opponents, prevents nongovernment organizations that provide abortions, give counseling about abortions, or advocate for safe access to abortion from receiving U.S. funding.

But while the policy is meant to stop abortions, research shows that it has the opposite effect—and with deadly consequences for women. One 2019 study published in *The Lancet* found that during previous periods when the policy was in effect, abortions increased by 40 percent compared to periods where it was rescinded, contraceptive use dropped by 13.5 percent, and pregnancies rose by 12 percent.

On [January 28], U.S. President Joe Biden rescinded the policy through a presidential memorandum, with reproductive rights advocates hailing it as a victory for the health and lives of women, girls, and [all] people who can become pregnant. During a signing ceremony in the Oval Office, Biden said the move will "reverse my predecessor's attack on women's health access." He added that the measure "relates to protecting women's health at home and abroad, and it reinstates the changes that were made to Title X (a family planning program that prohibits federal funds from being used for abortions) and other things making it harder for women to have access to affordable health care as it relates to their reproductive rights."

While the announcement has been welcomed by women's rights groups and their advocates, and they are working toward a permanent repeal, they stress that the collateral damage of the Trump-era policy is vast, and that it will take more than just an announcement to rebuild entire health systems fractured by the policy. That's because while previous incarnations of the rule under other Republican presidents primarily targeted family planning programs, Trump's supersized version (the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy) impacted a wide spectrum of U.S. funded health programs, spanning from HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment to malaria, tuberculosis, food, water, and sanitation programs.

In 2019, Trump took that policy a step further, announcing the withdrawal of funding from any organization that provides funding to other groups that carry out abortions or discuss abortions with their clients.

In total, the Trump administration's expansion of the rule increased the amount of money affected by the policy by nearly 20-fold, from approximately \$600 million to an estimated \$12 billion.



The loss of that funding cannot be overstated, according to organizations who refused to comply with Trump's policy.

MSI Reproductive Choices, a global non-profit that provides family planning advice and sexual health services, is one of them. The group said in a 2020 report that they lost \$30 million in funding, money that over the course of Trump's term they say would have served an estimated 8 million women with family planning services that would have prevented an estimated 6 million unintended pregnancies, 1.8 million unsafe abortions, and 20,000 maternal deaths.

MSI Reproductive Choices' Ethiopia country director Abebe Shibru, who was the country director for MSI Zimbabwe during most of Trump's term, said the policy "undermined the rights of women to exercise their rights to reproductive health." Shibru told CNN that

after the policy was reinstated, MSI's outreach locations and services across Zimbabwe were slashed in half, shuttering reproductive health access for millions of disadvantaged women living in the country's most remote areas. It's a scenario that has been unfolding across many parts of Africa, he said, and one that will take time to repair. "You can't just remove the damage of the last four years," Shibru said. "It will take time."

#### A 'Chilling' Effect

Melvine Ouyo, a Nairobi-based reproductive health nurse and former clinic director at Family Health Options Kenya, agrees, explaining that the effects of the policy didn't just damage maternal health, but also impacted services including malaria, HIV, and sanitation—and drove a wedge between crucial health partnerships, as groups that accepted the policy's conditions became wary of contact with groups that did not. "They

could not coordinate openly," Ouyo said, explaining that she believes the groups who did accept the policy's conditions were concerned about losing funding.

A United States Agency for International Development (USAID) spokesperson told CNN in November that "When a foreign NGO declines to agree to the (Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance) policy, USAID transitions the activities that NGO would have undertaken, with U.S. funding, to other partners, while minimizing any disruption of care." However, a State Department review from August 2020 found that the policy did disrupt some efforts to treat tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS and to deliver nutritional assistance, among other programs.

Ouyo said that the policy created a "chilling" effect not just in Kenya but across many other countries in Africa. "It created misunderstanding and lack of trust and made it hard for civil society groups to work in partnership," she said.

Ouyo also detailed another unexpected outcome of the policy: self-censorship. Organizations that accepted the conditions of the rule have declined to speak openly about its impact out of concerns that it could jeopardize future funding from USAID, she said. It's an effect that has turned back the clock on reproductive rights and has halted the flow of information about reproductive rights across the globe, even in countries where abortion is legal.

In Nepal, the legalization of abortion in 2002 is tied to a dramatic drop in maternal mortality. But research by the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), which promotes reproductive health rights, found the rule had threatened to reverse those gains. In IWHC's

2019 "Crisis in Care" report, which documented the impact of the policy with their partners in Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, and South Africa, a managing director of a Global Gag Rule-compliant organization in Nepal said that as their workers provided counseling services, people would sometimes try to speak with them about abortion, but "in such cases, we tell our staff to tell them that they don't know anything about it"—even though abortion is legal on a national level and that staff might know about safe places to access the service.

And that's the intended result of the Mexico City Policy's so-called "gag," reproductive health advocates say. The rule impedes the ability to share knowledge about the legal status of abortion and how to access safe abortion services through public health systems, with the consequence often resulting in people turning to unsafe abortion practices, reproductive rights groups and researchers say. One lawyer said in the IWHC report that in South Africa-where abortion is also legal, but can be difficult to access—that the policy "just makes a service that was already inaccessible even more inaccessible."

Now that the rule has been rescinded, communicating about safe abortion practices can resume, but being able to do so quickly-and effectively-with local partners on the ground will be key, said Nina Besser Doorley, Associate Director of Advocacy and Policy at the IWHC. Doorley explained that when policy changes in the U.S., "it can be very slow to sort of filter its way out into the field. ... So it's really critical that as the policy is rescinded, that it's also clearly communicated out. That's one other thing I'd say is that this is a long-term problem. And it really leads to long term effects," she said.

And the longer that it takes for those lines of communication to reopen, the longer that stigmatization and secrecy around services could linger. "Policies like this single out abortion and take it out of health care—and silo and subject it to criteria that are based on ideology and not based on health best practices," Doorley said.

Doorley explained the knock-on effect of the policy on health care networks. A lot of organizations that have lost funding under the policy have had to close clinics that were often the only easily accessible clinic for an entire community. Those people currently have increased barriers to access, given that they need to travel to another place to reach a clinic—which isn't always financially or logistically possible. Plus, the clinics that are still open might also be facing financial difficulties as a result of the policy and have, in turn, laid off staff or dropped other services. This can all add to the overall reduction of availability and quality of care for multiple communities, she said. "They (the Mexico City policy and subsequent expansions of the policy) increase stigma, they single it out and they put it separate from everything else," Doorley added, explaining that clinics build up trust the longer they are in a community. If that relationship is severed by the provider closing, which many have had to do due to lack of funding under the policy, Doorley said, "you can't just reopen the clinic, you can't just rehire the staff. It takes time to reestablish presences and communities to rehire staff to rebuild the trust of their relationships, and all of that it's way harder to do."

A U.S. congressional aide who works on global health issues agreed, telling CNN this week that "the tail of the Global Gag is very long," and that "it's not a matter of flipping a switch and suddenly

Melvine Ouyo, a Nairobi-based reproductive health nurse and former clinic director at Family **Health Options** Kenya [explains] that the effects of the policy didn't just damage maternal health, but also impacted services including malaria, HIV, and sanitation and drove a wedge between crucial health partnerships, as groups that accepted the policy's conditions became wary of contact with groups that did not.

women ... have access to care they didn't have before." That is one of the reasons why women's reproductive rights groups are calling on the Biden administration to take a step further.

#### Playing With Women's Rights

Paula Avila-Guillen, Executive Director at the Women's Equality Center in New York, has joined a chorus of human rights defenders who are calling on Biden to permanently repeal the rule so that it cannot be reinstated by the next president, noting that as the policy has been reinstated and rescinded along political party lines since its inception in 1984, it has left the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people hanging in the balance of who holds the keys to the White House. "What we have seen over the years is a kind of political play with women's rights globally, by the Democrat and Republican parties," Avila-Guillen told CNN.

Lawmakers and advocates are now working to put a stop to that. On [January 28], Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a New Hampshire Democrat, re-introduced the Global HER Act, a bill to permanently repeal the gag rule. In the U.S. House, Illinois Democratic Rep. Jan Schakowsky has written legislation to repeal the Helms Amendment, which remains in effect regardless of the party in power. Schakowsky's Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act was introduced into Congress last year, and she will re-introduce that same bill in February\*\*. The Helms Amendment was

enacted in 1973 and bars the use of U.S. foreign aid for performing abortions, not just to foreign non-profits, but to governments, multilateral organizations, and U.S. non-profits.

Schakowsky also noted the disproportionate impact the Mexico City Policy and the Helms rule have on poor women of color, saying that "these policies are clearly founded in racism that these women, these struggling women around the world, mostly Black and brown, would not be able to have access to abortion."

Even with these efforts to reverse or end the policies, Avila-Guillen said the damage of the Trump legacy will take time to undo. "But what the Trump administration did was take one step further—a few steps forward—and only emboldened governments with overarching political power to try to restrict women and girls, as opposed to any type of equality in general."

In October, the Trump administration aimed to seal its commitment to a global fight against abortion rights access, joining a group of largely repressive governments in co-sponsoring an international non-binding declaration that states there is "no international right to abortion, nor any international obligation on the part of States to finance or facilitate abortion."

The Biden administration said on [January 28] that it intends to with-draw co-sponsorship and its signature from the declaration, but it's an example of how Trump's tenure has emboldened

authoritarian governments and antiabortion groups that are still focused on dismantling any gains that women's reproductive rights movement have made, despite the Global Gag Rule, Avila-Guillen says.

Honduras—where points to abortion is banned under any circumstance-[which] ratified a new law into its constitution on [January 28] that now makes abortion reform nearly impossible. The legislation, which also prohibits legislating for equal marriage in the country, was backed by Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández's ruling party, who was recognized by Trump's administration as the winner of a widely disputed election in 2017 that the Organization of American States said was marred with irregularities that called the results into question.

The move demonstrates the values that the Trump administration placed on women and girls, she said, explaining that its support for the Honduras government—one that has long dismissed the safety and rights of women and girls, given that Honduras is one of the most dangerous places to be a woman—is just one example. "A lot of the political statements of the Trump administration were saying to these governments that it was ok to enact harsher laws, it was ok not to care about women and girls," Avila-Guillen said.

She believes that it will take time to fully understand the impact that this version of the Global Gag Rule—and the wider impact that the Trump administration's rhetoric—has had on global gender equality. "Until we know how far back we went, we won't know how many steps forward we need to take to catch up," she said.

<sup>\*</sup> A companion bill was introduced in the House by Reps. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Ami Bera (D-CA), and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) on the same day. The Senate bill number is S. 142, and the House bill number is H.R. 556.

<sup>\*\*</sup>At the time of our print deadline (February 17), the bill had not yet been reintroduced.

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## Trump Left International Abortion Rights in Shambles, Activists Say. Can Biden Undo the Damage?

Biden vowed to repeal the Global Gag Rule, but Trump's "anti-woman rhetoric" isn't necessarily going away.

By Urooba Jamal | Originally published by The Lily, a product of The Washington Post, on January 19, 2021



In 2019, Melvine Ouyo, a health policy expert and reproductive rights activist, attended a conference in her city of Nairobi, where antiabortion campaigners were protesting the event. Shortly after that, Ouyo said, she met a pregnant 14-year-old girl who had no information about how she could access a safe abortion if she chose.

Ouyo said she believes that if the Trump administration's Global Gag Rule—a U.S. foreign aid policy that restricts funding for abortion-related services—had not been in place, the campaigners wouldn't have had such a prominent platform, and the girl would have had more information about her reproductive health options.

"The country has recorded a high number of teenage pregnancies," Ouyo said of the last few years. She added that this increase, coupled with restrictions on abortion funding, has forced more girls in Kenya to drop out of school or seek unsafe abortion options, sometimes leading to deaths. "And this has been worsened by the current pandemic situation," she said.

While abortion access was widened in Kenya in 2010, it largely remains illegal, and many low-income women and girls cannot afford it at private facilities where it is more easily available. About 2,600 women and girls die each year in Kenya as a result of unsafe abortions, higher than the global average.

In the last four years, clinics in the country have lost crucial funding, forcing many to shut down or offer fewer services. Advocates say that is the impact worldwide—not just in Kenya—of the Global Gag Rule. The Reagan-era policy has forced organizations to choose between forgoing providing abortion-related services or losing U.S. aid vital to their existence.

And while every Republican president since Reagan implemented the Global Gag Rule, Trump's expansion was unprecedented: It went from applying to only family planning funding, amounting to around \$600 million a year, to affecting all U.S. foreign aid—about \$9 billion a year. This has impacted funding for health programs aimed at combating everything from HIV to malaria.

"As a front-line provider, as an activist on the ground, the Global Gag Rule has really had devastating impacts," said Ouyo, who formerly worked for the family planning [organization] Family Health Options Kenya. "It was not easy for individuals, organizations, as well as even the government, to contain the kind of impact that has been felt on the ground."

President-elect Joe Biden has promised to repeal the Global Gag Rule as one of his first acts in office. He is also slated to undo other Trump-era policies, including restoring funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the world's largest provider of reproductive health care, as well as repealing the Helms Amendment, which restricts U.S. foreign aid for abortion. Abortion rights advocates on the ground are hopeful about these changes—even though they say they're still reeling from the effects of Trump's policies.

#### **Media Hits**

We were in touch with many media outlets leading up to and in the wake of President Biden's repeal of the Global Gag Rule. We were successful in connecting several of our international partners—Melvine Ouyo, Dr. Rodrigo Barillas, and Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng—with journalists who wanted to speak with health care providers impacted by the last administration's expanded Global Gag Rule. And speaking on behalf of Population Connection Action Fund, Brian Dixon, our Senior Vice President for Media and Government Relations, and Stacie Murphy, our Director of Congressional Relations, were interviewed by several reporters as

We are sharing two of the articles that heavily quoted our partners in this issue of our magazine. The one that begins on this page was published in the days before President Biden rescinded the Global Gag Rule. The previous article that began on page 14 was written in the days following Biden's repeal of the heinous policy.

We are proud that we were able to contribute to the conversation around this welcome and necessary policy reversal, and we look forward to working with the Biden administration in the years to come to expand access to voluntary family planning to everyone, everywhere.

Below is a list of media outlets that published articles featuring us and/or our partners about Biden rescinding the Global Gag Rule:

- CNN
- Devex
- elDiario.es
- Politico (two articles)
- · The Independent
- The Lily



**Above**: Brian Dixon, Senior Vice President for Media and Government Relations, addresses participants at Capitol Hill Days in 2018 (Photo: Bill Petros) **Opposite**: Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng gives the keynote speech at Capitol Hill Days in 2018 (Photo: Bill Petros)

"There's just been enormous damage done to global health infrastructure around the world when the biggest donor puts these kinds of restrictions," said Brian Dixon of the progressive advocacy group Population Connection Action Fund (PCAF).

Dixon explained that other countries have tried to step in to fill some of the United States' funding gaps, but they have been unable to match the losses as a result of Trump's policies.

According to Riva Eskinazi, director of strategic partnerships and development at the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the organization "lost about \$100 million in global health assistance from the U.S. over the four years of the Trump administration, in over 32 countries in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia."

Last year, the U.S. government's watchdog agency found that there was \$12 billion in gagged funds across 1,300 global health grants in more than 70 countries. And on the ground, the policies have been potentially deadly: A 2019 report from the International Women's Health Coalition found that the Global Gag Rule is "killing women worldwide."

Ouyo has also had the opportunity to see the impact in other parts of Africa, including Uganda and Tanzania, where she said the situation is just as dire.

In South Africa, for example, despite abortion being legal, the Global Gag Rule has still managed to have an effect.

"For us in South Africa, the impact of the global gag was already felt with George W. Bush's presidency," said Tlaleng Mofokeng, a physician and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health. She explained that at that time the HIV crisis was at its peak in South Africa, and organizations battling it largely relied on U.S. aid. In turn, if family planning organizations refused to sign on to the Global Gag Rule, their STI prevention services were undermined as a result of the loss of U.S. funding.

In other words, she said, Trump's expansion of the gag rule happened "in a fractured system. And that's why it was challenging and more catastrophic."

Specifically, Mofokeng said, Trump's expanded policies have led to health data and research gaps, as well as added to the stigma around abortion. Because women's rights organizations also receive U.S. aid, she said, the lack of funding has also contributed to re-victimizing women who face sexual or physical violence.

"All of these failures are enabled by the global gag because the same government that is in charge of providing safe abortion is the same government that outsources [their work to] NGOs," she said. These nonprofit groups are supported by foreign aid to implement

these programs, and must sign on to the Global Gag Rule to access any U.S. funding in the first place, she added.

In regions like Latin America—where, for the most part, abortion is very restrict[ed]—the Global Gag Rule and related policies have also had negative impacts that are not as widely discussed, according to activists.

In 2017, a Dutch abortion rights nonprofit, Women on Waves, attempted to land on the shores of Guatemala, where abortion is illegal except to save a [pregnant person's] life. Guatemala's army blocked their entry; the workers had arrived to administer abortions to Guatemalan women by taking them to international waters, where local laws do not apply. They would have given doses of mifepristone and misoprostol, drugs that induce abortions.

Misoprostol also helps stop postpartum hemorrhages. However, because of its associated use with abortion, it was unable to be used for that purpose in Guatemala shortly after Trump's expansion of the Global Gag Rule.



"In a country where maternal mortality is still high, [this] was a huge impact for the country," said Rodrigo Barillas, executive director of WINGS Guatemala, a reproductive rights nonprofit organization.

Barillas explained that in recent years, highly educated staff in clinics across the country have been laid off because of funding cuts, and pregnancies of girls and teens in the country—usually as a result of rape—have continued to soar.

Across the world in South Asia, staggered access to abortion services has been made worse because of Trump's policies, according to Deepesh Gupta, who is in charge of nine countries in the subcontinent as senior technical adviser for [IPPF].

"Advocates were already struggling to do this sort of work," he said, adding that it was surprising the gag rule impacted countries where abortion is legal, for similar reasons as in South Africa.

"We were not allowed to use of any kind of funding, even if we [just used the word] abortion," he said.

Kalpana Apte, secretary general of the Family Planning Association of India, has seen firsthand its impact in India. In an email statement to *The Lily*, she said that in addition to reduced material resources, it also impacted mindsets around abortion, adding to its stigma.

Advocates say the far-reaching consequences of these policies may persist even after Biden's inauguration.

"Trump's anti-woman rhetoric and legacy will certainly continue in some countries like Brazil, or Egypt or Indonesia," said Eskinazi, of [IPPF]. "So that's another piece that we have to watch very closely

... the [antiabortion] opposition which has been so well-funded globally through the U.S."

In Guatemala, Barillas has witnessed something similar with the recent vote to legalize abortion in Argentina: Although the pro-choice movement in Guatemala was emboldened by the win and celebrated the news, the far-right opposition has also become more staunch in its stance, he said.

Many advocates are in unanimous agreement, however, that Trump's departure is a welcome shift for international reproductive rights.

Both IPPF and PCAF are working toward permanent repeal of the Global Gag Rule, advocating for this to happen through the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights (HER) Act. In July 2020, Democrats in the U.S. House also introduced the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act to repeal the Helms Amendment. With a Democrat-controlled Congress and presidency, advocates are hopeful substantive change could be coming.

Dixon said the time is ripe to take these issues outside the realm of "partisan football," with Democrats like Biden promising to repeal the rule and Republicans promising to reinstall it.

"Another president is going to be elected someday; it might be a conservative, and we want to make sure they can't just reimpose the gag rule again," he said.



**Right:** Rodrigo Barillas, MD, Executive Director of WINGS Guatemala and member of Population Connection Board of Directors (Photo: Lisa Shannon)







## As Biden and Harris Take Over the White House, McConnell Surrenders Control of the Senate

By Stacie Murphy, Director of Congressional Relations

n January 20, President Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala D. Harris were sworn into office. The Trump era is officially over, and though repairing the damage remains a herculean task, the new administration wasted no time in getting started.

#### Biden Takes Executive Action on Reproductive Health

Only hours after his inauguration, President Biden signed an order freezing all pending regulatory changes begun by the Trump administration. Included among them was a last-minute attempt to further expand the Global Gag Rule by applying it to USAID contracts, which comprise some 40 percent of the agency's family planning initiatives. Advocates had been worried that Trump allies would manage to push the final rule through before the end of his term, which would have made it more complicated and time-consuming for the Biden administration to unwind. Fortunately, the Trump administration ran out of time before it could complete the process, and we expect the proposed rule to be scrapped.

On January 28, President Biden signed a second executive memorandum more explicitly focused on reproductive rights. The measure revoked the Global Gag Rule and ordered government agencies to immediately begin informing grantees that the restrictions have been lifted. It also set in motion a process to reinstate the U.S. contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had been halted under Trump, and withdrew the U.S. from the so-called Geneva Consensus Declaration, a United Nations initiative largely driven by the Trump administration that promotes a narrow, anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ view of human rights. Additionally, the memorandum instructed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to begin the process of reviewing the so-called Domestic Gag Rule, a Trump administration rule which has severely restricted the Title X program since the rule went into effect in 2019. Because the rule was finalized and implemented, it cannot be undone by executive action alone. It will have to go through a regulatory process that will take, at a minimum, several months to be completed.

#### Georgia Runoff Outcome Leaves Senate Split

Control of the White House was decided in November, but the Senate took a little longer. When no candidate in either of the two Georgia Senate races won an outright majority in the November

general election, both races went to a runoff. On January 5, Democrats Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock won those races, defeating Republicans David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, respectively. Their wins mean the Senate now has a 50-50 split between Democrats and Republicans. (Senators Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont are registered Independents; both caucus with the Democrats). With Vice President Kamala Harris presiding over that body and ready to break any ties, Democrats are officially in control, making Chuck Schumer (D-NY) the new Senate Majority Leader. The implications for reproductive health and rights are positive, though not as straightforward as they might seem. Though there is now effectively no risk of hostile legislation moving forward, several members on each side have mixed records, particularly on abortion access, meaning affirmative progress on some aspects of our agenda remains a challenge.

#### Proactive Bills Reintroduced, With More to Come

On the same day President Biden repealed the Global Gag Rule, champions in both the Senate and the House reintroduced the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights (HER) Act (S. 142/H.R. 556). As in previous years, Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) leads the bill in the Senate, while in the House, Democrats Barbara Lee (CA), Jan Schakowsky (IL), and Ami Bera (CA) have taken over from Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), who retired at the end of the previous term. Despite President Biden's repeal of the Global Gag Rule, passing the Global HER Act is still vital, since it is the only way to ensure that the Global Gag Rule cannot return with a future administration. Senator Shaheen highlighted that reality when she reintroduced the bill, saying:

We know how detrimental this policy has been-how it likely contributed to increased maternal deaths, unsafe abortions, and compromised access to critical care. Rescinding this rule is the start but it is not enough—there needs to be a permanent fix. That is why today I will reintroduce my bipartisan bill, the Global HER Act. The Global HER Act would permanently repeal this policy so women and their families around the world can trust that they will have access to reproductive medical services and so international organizations on the frontlines can carry out their missions to deliver care without worrying if they'll have to choose between limiting care for patients or losing funding. Enough is enough.

The Global HER Act has 45 cosponsors in the Senate, including Republicans Susan Collins (ME) and Lisa Murkowski (AK), and 173 co-sponsors—all Democrats—in the House.

The Global HER Act is not the only proactive bill we expect to see reintroduced over the next few months. Rep. Jan Schakowsky plans to reintroduce the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act to repeal the Helms Amendment, which, since 1973, has prohibited the use of U.S. foreign assistance funds for abortion care overseas. That bill is currently expected to be reintroduced in March. We also expect there will be a companion bill in the Senate, though details on sponsorship and timing are still pending. Additionally, Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA) plans to reintroduce the proactive Support UNFPA Funding Act.

#### Supreme Court Greenlights Abortion Pill Restrictions

In mid-January, the Supreme Court, in its first abortion-related case since the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was replaced by the more conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett, sent a worrying signal about its willingness to consider future abortion restrictions. In an unsigned, unexplained order, the Court allowed the federal government to restrict access

demic by refusing to waive a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rule that requires patients to pick up the drugs in-person at a hospital or clinic. Waivers were issued for other drugs with similar safety profiles. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), along with other groups, argued in court that this requirement unjustifiably exposed patients to the risk of contracting COVID-19 and thus constituted an undue burden on their rights. A federal judge in Maryland agreed and issued an injunction. The Trump administration sought to have the injunction stayed. After some additional legal wrangling, the Supreme Court sided with the Trump administration on January 12. Only Chief Justice John Roberts offered any insight into the decision, stating the courts owed deference to the government in its response to a public health crisis. Justices Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor, and Stephen Breyer have indicated that they would not have approved the stay. In the matter of this particular restriction, the underlying issue is likely to be moot. It is probable that the Biden administration will extend the waiver to cover abortion medications. But the decision should be a warning to reproductive rights advocates about what is to come.

to medication abortion during the pan-



## Thanks to the #Fight4HER Activists Who Helped During Our Four-Year Resistance!

By Lindsay Apperson, National Field Manager

he new president and new Congress are quickly working to restore access to reproductive health care in the U.S. and around the world. President Biden repealed the Global Gag Rule, restored funding to UNFPA, and took steps to dismantle the Title X Domestic Gag Rule. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) re-introduced the Global HER Act in the Senate and House, respectively. We're closer than ever before to permanently repealing the Global Gag Rule!

As we celebrate our wins, we're thankful to the people who got us to this moment. Over the past four years, over 56,000 #Fight4HER activists have taken action to push back against attempts to roll back access to comprehensive reproductive health care worldwide. Hundreds of volunteers across the country did the hard work of organizing their communities around our bold agenda on reproductive rights and health, hosting high visibility events, attending our annual Capitol Hill Days conference and Summer of HER program, and holding their elected officials accountable. Our volunteer leaders are the backbone of our campaign. Here are just four of the wonderful volunteers who helped build momentum and get us to where we are today.

#### **Kyrah Hughley**



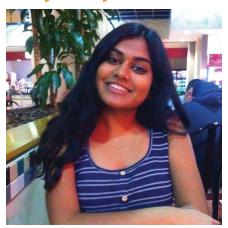
Last summer, I participated in the Summer of HER, and it just about changed my life. Since the fellowship ended, I have continued to phone bank and attend National Volunteer Calls. I love this work, and I will continue to do it because it is the 21st century and women's bodies are still being policed. Women have proved that we are creative, innovative, and educated and that we should be treated as equals. Until then, I will continue being a leader in the #Fight4HER to educate myself and others and amplify the voices of people around the world who need access to comprehensive health care.

#### **Katie Yeager**



started volunteering #Fight4HER when I met some canvassers on campus my freshman year. I had never heard about the Global Gag Rule before then, so I became determined to contribute to the fight for reproductive rights. Since then, I've served as Vice President and President for our club here at the University of Colorado Denver and have participated in Capitol Hill Days. It's been inspiring to be around so many passionate individuals and contribute to real legislative and social change. I can't wait to see what's next for me and #Fight4HER!

#### Ranjana Iyer



Last summer, I was a #Fight4HER fellow in Tucson, and I have continued my work with the campaign in California. I have always been passionate about women's rights and empowering women. During the fellowship, I got to learn about different forms of outreach like relational organizing, phone banking, and talking to people with similar and different views. I had the opportunity to lobby my congressman to thank him for his support of reproductive rights and health. I think it's so important and exciting to now make sure we pass the Global HER Act to put a permanent end to the Global Gag Rule and to build support for the Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act to repeal the Helms Amendment. I'm looking forward to continuing the fight!

#### Liz Boucher



I am a 34-year-old New Hampshire resident, wife, and mother of two young girls who became involved with #Fight4HER as a 2020 Summer of HER fellow. After volunteering for a Democratic presidential campaign, I knew I needed to keep the momentum going. I believe in fighting for HER because, globally, empowering women leads to a healthier and safer world. I am proud that NH's very own Senator Jeanne Shaheen is the primary sponsor of the Global HER Act in the Senate, and I enjoy supporting her efforts. As a woman, mother, and health care provider, I continue to be insulted by political interference in reproductive health care. The Global HER Act reinforces that reproductive freedom is a basic human right—essential and not a political tool.

Sign our petition to your members of Congress to urge them to become cosponsors of the Global HER Act (or to thank them if they are already cosponsors): p2a.co/4D75CyP

Of course, we still have a lot of work to do. Although President Biden repealed the Global Gag Rule, the next president could impose the policy again with just the stroke of a pen. No one person should be able to determine access to reproductive health care for millions of people around the world.

We're looking forward to continuing working alongside our volunteer leaders to pass the Global HER Act to permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule, ensuring that no future president can unilaterally reinstate it ever again.



## Building Civic Competence With PopEd A Lesson on Political Representation

By Pam Wasserman and Pete Bailey

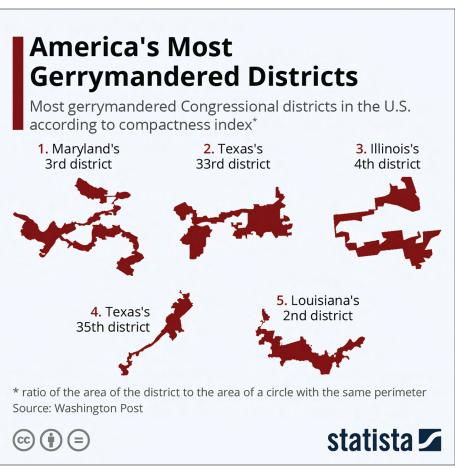
he concept of democracy has been much on our minds these past several months, as we've recognized the fragility of something many of us took for granted in the United States. Even before the rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, to try to overthrow a free and fair election, other pernicious

strategies had been used to try to erode our democracy—voter suppression, misinformation from dubious media

sources, and gerrymandering.

To coincide with the 2020 Decennial Census, the PopEd team released a new set of lesson plans and student readings, aptly named 330 Million in the USA. Designed for secondary social studies classrooms, some of the components are especially relevant for classes on U.S. Government and Civics.

One in particular, "The People's House," examines U.S. population and congressional representation. Part 1 of the lesson sets up a debate on the appropriate size of the U.S. House of Representatives based on our current population. For debate prep, students explore historical primary sources from *The Federalist Papers* (Madison suggested a body that would grow to maintain a 1:30,000 ratio) to the 1911 Apportionment Act capping



statista.com/chart/21313/most-gerrymandered-districts-us/

the size to its present 435 (1:216,000 that year) to contemporary essays on the merits of lifting that cap to allow for better representation (today's average is 1:763,000).

One of the arguments for increasing the number of congressional districts is to

make it more difficult for ruling parties in each state to gerrymander the districts using the latest census data. That brings us to Part 2 of the activity, which explains gerrymandering—the history, techniques, and resulting tortured shapes of many of our current districts.

The activity invites students to be district mapmakers practicing their skills at two insidious gerrymandering techniques: cracking and packing. "Cracking" separates groups of people whose similar voting habits would likely lead to electing a representative of a certain political party. "Packing" combines groups of similar voters—regardless of location—into the same district so their votes do not influence election results in more than one district.

Try your mapmaking skills at the sample worksheet assignments below. Then consider: How does gerrymandering affect elections? Why is gerrymandering often described as undemocratic? How could the United States end partisan gerrymandering? These questions will be especially timely this year as state legislatures receive the new 2020 Census data and conduct the once-a-decade reapportionment of congressional districts.

For high school students approaching voting age, this activity may soon become more than an academic exercise, as they consider the weight of their votes in our democratic process. With so much

at stake for our nation's future, PopEd will continue to find ways to foster civic competence through our curriculum.

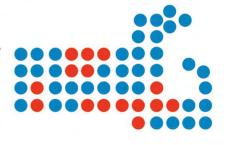
The full activity, as well as a blog post explaining redistricting and the U.S. Census, can be downloaded from the PopEd website:

- Activity: populationeducation.org/ resource/the-peoples-house/
- Blog: populationeducation.org/ a-brief-history-of-howgerrymandering-distorts-u-spolitics/

#### **Massachusetts**

Create six equally sized districts containing nine population groups. Gerrymander the groups of voter populations so that six districts are majority blue safe seats, and zero are majority red safe seats.

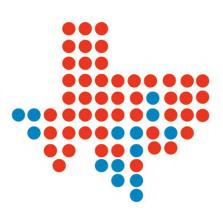
Method of gerrymandering (circle one): packing or cracking



#### Texas

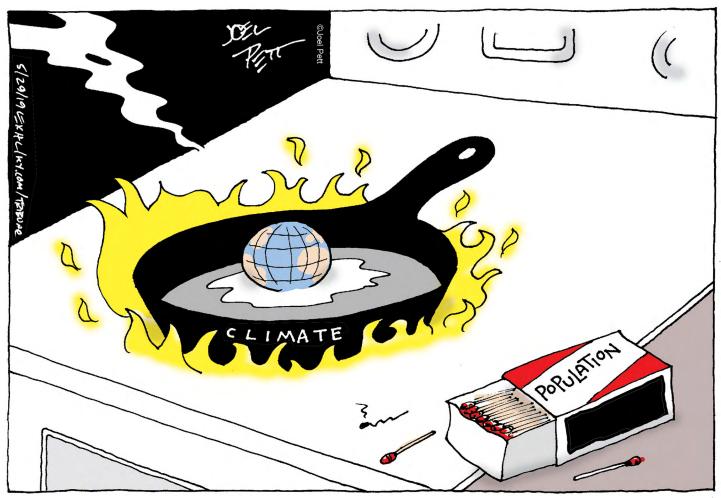
Create seven equally sized districts containing nine population groups. Gerrymander the groups of voter populations so that zero districts are majority blue safe seats, and seven are majority red safe seats.

Method of gerrymandering (circle one): packing or cracking



**Answers**: The Massachusetts assignment illustrates "packing," while the Texas assignment is an example of "cracking." Sample solutions to grouping the districts can be found on the last page of the activity here: populationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/the-peoples-house.pdf

#### **C**ARTOON



Joel Pett Editorial Cartoon used with the permission of Joel Pett and the Cartoonist Group. All rights reserved.

#### **EDITORIAL EXCERPTS**

#### Los Angeles Times

It's a relief to see the Biden administration swiftly begin to dismantle the crippling rules and regulations put in place by the Trump administration to prevent health care providers not just from offering abortions but from even offering information about the procedure to patients....

The Global Gag Rule has been alternately invoked by Republican presidents and withdrawn by Democratic ones ever since it was first imposed by President Reagan at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Mexico City in 1984 (which is why it is also known as the Mexico City policy)....

The Global Gag Rule is onerous enough when it prevents family planning organizations in foreign countries from providing abortions or counseling on abortion. But under the Trump administration, the rule was extended to any health care organization that also happened to provide reproductive care. That meant organizations providing care in the fields of HIV/AIDS, malaria, maternal and child health—which also may have provided reproductive care to women and girls, abortions, or abortion counseling—were at risk of losing billions of dollars in U.S. aid unless they stopped any and all levels of their abortion care. When organizations agreed to the terms, they couldn't provide reproductive-age women with information on abortion even if they requested it. When organizations refused to comply and lost much-needed aid, they sometimes had to scale back public health programs. One study in 2019 showed reduced access to contraception, prenatal care, HIV testing, and screening for cancers across several African countries, including South Africa, as a result of turning away funds. ...

[The Biden administration] should work with Congress to pass legislation that will prevent the Global Gag Rule from ever being put in place again. The health care organizations that desperately need this funding do not need to be put through a back-and-forth of building up and whittling down their capacity every four to eight years.

-January 27, 2021

### The Gazette

Continuing down their list of poor priorities during a deadly infectious disease pandemic, Iowa Republicans are offering a radical measure to limit abortion access.

The proposal would declare that the Iowa Constitution "does not recognize, grant, or secure a right to abortion or require the public funding of abortion." If it earns final approval, it would give future legislators the ability to pass extreme abortion restrictions and leave the courts with little ability to intervene.

The GOP campaign against family planning appears to be backfiring. After a decades long decline in the number of abortions performed in our state, the figure jumped up by 25 percent between 2018 and 2019, the *Associated Press* reported last year.

There's a clear line between the increase in abortions and Iowa's decision in 2017 to turn down federal family planning funds. State officials set up their own program, allowing them to exclude organizations that also perform abortions, such as Planned Parenthood....

All that has made it harder for low-income Iowans to get birth control counseling, contraception, testing, and exams. We know those very same services are associated with lower abortion rates. Instead of making them more accessible, legislative Republicans are determined to restrict abortion rights. ...

Iowans are narrowly divided on abortion rights. While 48 percent believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases and 45 percent believe abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, according to a *Des Moines Register*/Mediacom Iowa Poll released last year, support for an anti-abortion constitutional amendment is paltry: Just 33 percent support it, while 54 percent oppose. ...

-January 28, 2021

