

Congress of the United States

Washington D.C. 20515

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers,

As you begin to consider appropriations for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, we write to request your support for strong funding levels for family planning and reproductive health. In particular, recognizing the critical increases in funding and policy changes to ensure those resources can flow effectively and efficiently to qualified providers in recent House-passed bills, we respectfully request that international family planning and reproductive health programs be funded at no less than \$1.27 billion, including \$85 million for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and be free from policy restrictions, like the global gag rule and outdated, irrelevant riders on UNFPA's funding. This additional incremental increase in funding in the FY2023 bill and beyond would expand access to services that help people survive and thrive and send a strong signal on the need to increase resources after twelve years of flat funding. It is also an important step toward meeting the estimated \$1.74 billion U.S. share of the global need for these critical programs. Our investments in these programs save lives, support our broader global health, gender equity, development, humanitarian, and foreign policy priorities, and are ultimately cost-effective.

As you know, funding for international affairs makes up less than one percent of the federal budget. Investments in development and diplomacy – including support for humanitarian programs, democracy and governance, disaster assistance, and global health – are the foundation for building a more peaceful, prosperous, and healthy world. The global COVID-19 pandemic has strained even the most advanced health systems across the world, and no country has been immune to disruptions in access to health care seen over the past two years. In addition to the recent supplemental funding requested for global COVID-19 response, we must continue to invest in the long-standing programs that have served communities around the world for decades in order to not lose momentum as we fight this pandemic and persisting health challenges and inequities.

Bilateral Family Planning

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) playing its part is critical to ensure countries meet the family planning and reproductive health needs of their people. Our nation's investments in international family planning have had a significant sustained impact in recent years. The funding appropriated for the U.S. assistance for international family planning and reproductive health programs and UNFPA in FY 2021 made it possible for:

- 27.2 million women and couples to receive contraceptive services;
- 12 million unintended pregnancies to be averted;
- 4 million unsafe abortions to be averted; and
- 19,000 maternal deaths to be averted.

These investments not only save and improve lives but are also highly cost-effective. For every additional dollar invested in contraceptive services, \$3.00 would be saved in pregnancy related care.

An estimated 218 million women in low and middle-income countries want to prevent or delay pregnancy but face significant barriers to using modern contraceptive methods. Family planning and reproductive health programs are key interventions which contribute to our shared global health, gender equity, development, humanitarian, and foreign policy goals, including prioritizing women and girls, advancing gender equality, reducing infant and maternal mortality, preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and combating gender-based violence.

Additionally, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian crisis resulting from the invasion of Ukraine, as well as other crises, highlight the importance of all people being able to access contraception and other essential sexual, reproductive and maternal health services along with programs to reduce and respond to gender-based violence. As such, we recommend that international family planning and reproductive health programs be funded at no less than \$1.27 billion.

Prioritizing UNFPA Funding

As the UN agency mandated to address sexual and reproductive health and rights, UNFPA plays a critical role in helping the U.S. achieve its global health and gender equality goals. The largest multilateral provider of family planning and reproductive health services, UNFPA works in more than 155 countries, often where USAID does not operate family planning or reproductive health programs. The agency also plays a vital role in ending maternal mortality and morbidity, ending the unmet need for family planning and ending all forms of gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation and child marriage. In humanitarian crises and conflict affected areas, UNFPA has taken a leading role in responding to reproductive and community health needs. For example, UNFPA is providing lifesaving reproductive health supplies and services in Ukraine and many of the surrounding countries accepting Ukrainian refugees, many of whom are women and children. UNFPA continues to play an essential role in the COVID-19 pandemic response providing contraception, personal protective equipment (PPE), lifesaving maternal health medicines and helping health systems contact trace and maintain essential maternal and perinatal care. We recommend that the House demonstrate support for this work by providing UNFPA with at least \$85 million and remove outdated and irrelevant policy riders on this funding.

Evidence-Based Policy Changes, Including Permanent Repeal of the Global Gag Rule and the Helms Amendment

Both adequate funding and evidence-based policies that support sexual and reproductive health and rights are critical to ensuring successful global health programs. While we welcomed the Biden-Harris Administration's January 28th, 2021 presidential memorandum rescinding the global gag rule, the continued impact of the policy highlights the importance of its permanent repeal. When in place, this policy undermines the effectiveness of these critical programs by excluding some of the most capable health organizations, which have the infrastructure, expertise and community trust in areas we must reach in order to achieve our global health goals. Additionally, the policy blocks health care access, stifles local advocacy efforts, hinders reproductive rights and puts lifesaving services out of reach for communities who already face systematic barriers to care worldwide. More than a year after its repeal, this policy continues to cause fear and confusion and hinder the rebuilding of important service referral and advocacy networks, as organizations struggle to reestablish programs lost between 2017-2021 and remain concerned that efforts could be halted again by a future U.S. president. We strongly support efforts to permanently end the global gag rule in order to build back sustainable global health partnerships, accelerate progress, and ensure that a future administration cannot reinstate this harmful policy.

Furthermore, we also request that the FY 2023 bill, reiterate critical policy changes passed in last year's House bill that sought to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights globally. This includes the elimination of the Helms Amendment for the first time in decades, thereby allowing US foreign assistance funds to be used for safe abortion services targeted at saving women's lives. This also includes modifications to the Kemp-Kasten amendment to help prevent it from being misused for political purposes. This will ensure that family planning and reproductive health are treated equally to other global health programs.

For the health of individuals around the world, we firmly support international family planning and reproductive health programs and urge you to provide this level of funding and take action to end policies that undermine its effectiveness and subvert its goals in the FY 2023 Appropriations Bill.

We appreciate your consideration and thank you for your ongoing leadership.

Sincerely,



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



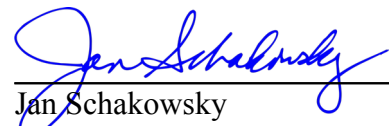
Ami Bera, M.D.
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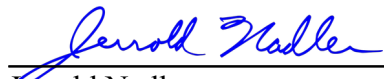
Carolyn B. Maloney
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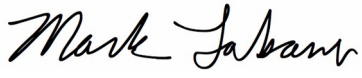
Karen Bass
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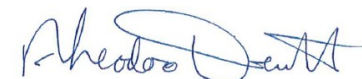
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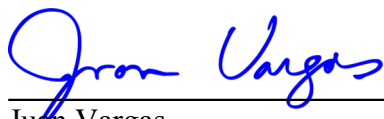
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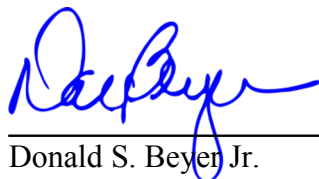
Juan Vargas
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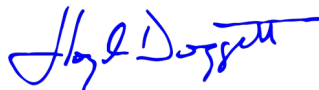
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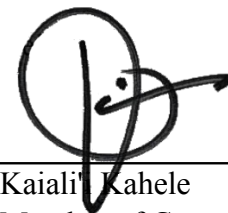
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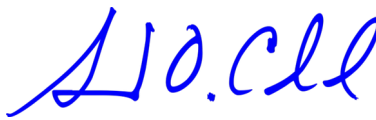
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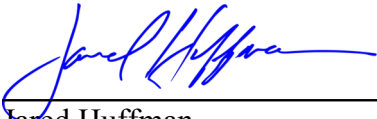
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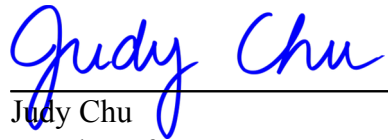
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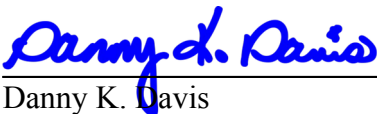
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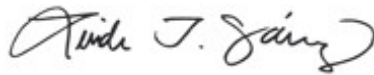
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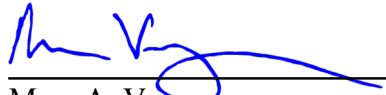
Eleanor Holmes Norton
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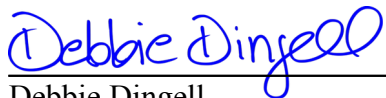
Marc A. Veasey
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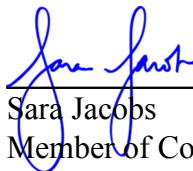
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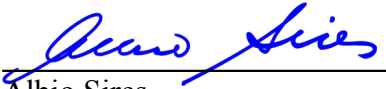
Frederica S. Wilson
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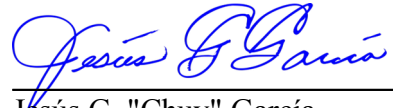
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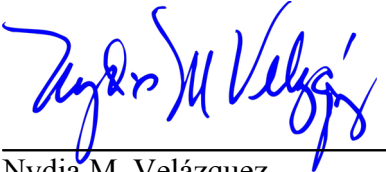
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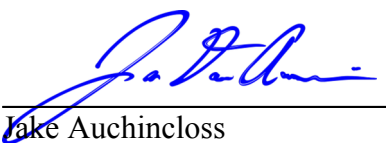
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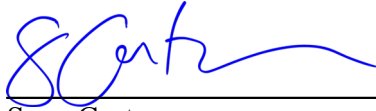
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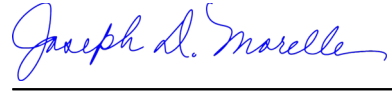
Brian Higgins
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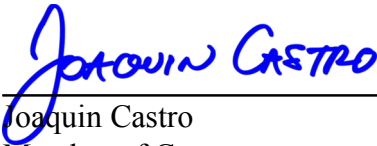
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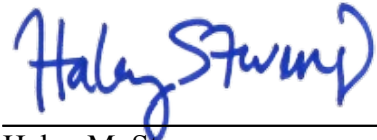
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Rashida Tlaib
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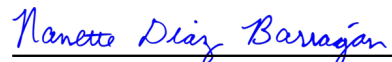
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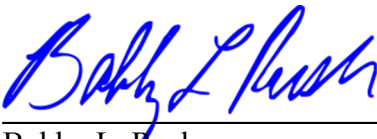
Haley M. Stevens
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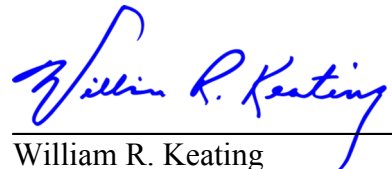
Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Bobby L. Rush
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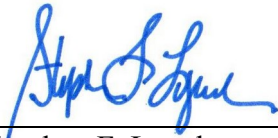
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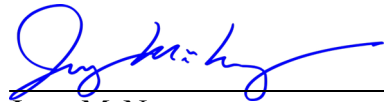
Gregorio Kilili Camacho
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Dwight Evans
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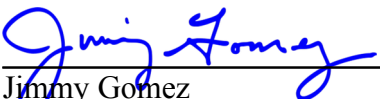
David N. Cicilline
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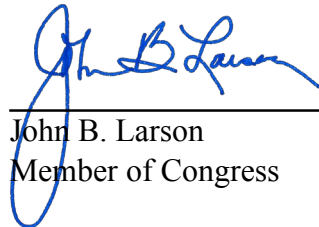
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John B. Larson
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Mike Levin
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Scott H. Peters
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Angie Craig
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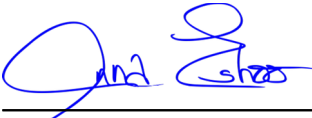
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Bradley Scott Schneider
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Marie Newman
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Anna G. Eshoo
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Chris Pappas
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Marilyn Strickland
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Ritchie Torres
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Peter Welch
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Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



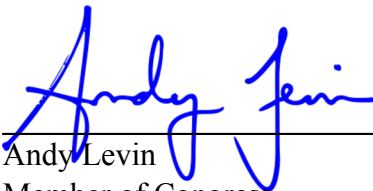
Terri A. Sewell
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
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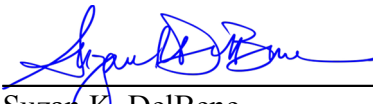
Andy Levin
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Cynthia Axne
Member of Congress



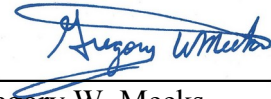
Sean Patrick Maloney
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Suzan K. DelBene
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



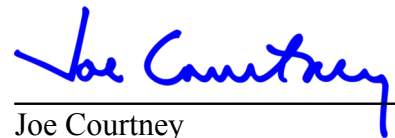
Gregory W. Meeks
Chair
House Foreign Affairs
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Elissa Slotkin
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Joe Courtney
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Adam B. Schiff
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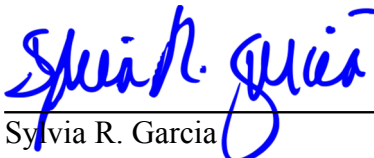
Grace F. Napolitano
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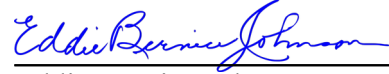
Ilhan Omar
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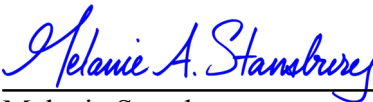
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



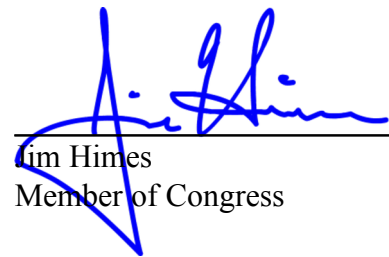
Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Melanie Stansbury
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Jim Himes
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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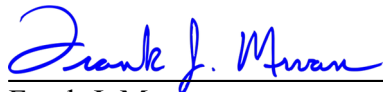
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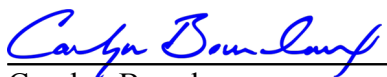
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