

Catholics for Choice: Warning- US foreign assistance can kill you

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Jon O'Brien, President of Catholics for Choice issued the following statement in response to the Trump administration's directive to US agencies significantly expanding the Global Gag Rule on foreign assistance.

"With this action, President Trump continues to provide political payback to antiabortion groups. This action will shut out qualified, experienced aid groups which refuse to toe this administration's ideological line against women's rights. The dramatic expansion to the scope of this draconian policy will further erode, undermine and destroy the quality of US taxpayer funded aid. The Trump administration's action turns US foreign assistance into a slush fund for ultra-conservative culture warriors bent on exporting their anti-women's rights agenda to parts of the world where the health and welfare of the world's poorest women are most in jeopardy.

The Trump Global Gag Rule will severely impact the Global South and other areas where not having access to condoms, contraception and safe abortion can kill, destroying families and devastating communities. The business interests of religious groups like the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Saddleback Church have just been privileged by the president to better gorge themselves on taxpayer funded aid while ignoring the sexual and reproductive health needs of the most vulnerable, such as those seeking prevention and treatment for HIV/AIDS or Zika and survivors of sex trafficking.

For those Americans who voted for Trump in the hope that he represented positive change, we have, in this decision, absolute proof that truth, reason, science, compassion and social justice can all be sacrificed on the altar of political payback to social and religious conservatives. This decision will cost lives and the recklessness of it beggars belief. With a dangerous policy like this attached, US foreign aid should come with a warning label.”