

A PETITION TO THE U.S. CONGRESS

Reproductive and sexual health information and services are critically important to women - especially young women - around the world. In fact, complications from pregnancy are the leading cause of death for young women ages 15 through 19 in low- and middle-income countries.

Quality reproductive health care, which includes sex education, family planning services, and pre- and postnatal care, is often limited or nonexistent for young people.

More than 200 million women who want to delay or avoid pregnancy lack access to the modern methods of contraception to do so. It is estimated that the unmet need for family planning among young people is twice that among adults.

Reproductive and sexual health must remain a central component of a broader U.S. global development effort, as access to these services helps to reduce poverty, promote human rights, and secure social justice.

We must take action in support of the lives and well being of all young people around the world.

TOGETHER, WE THE UNDERSIGNED:

Call on Congress to allocate at least \$1 billion dollars in U.S. international family planning assistance for fiscal year 2010. Family planning programs reduce maternal and newborn mortality, reduce unintended pregnancies and the incidence of unsafe abortion, and increase the awareness, acceptability, and use of contraceptives among young people.

We further urge Congress to ensure that reproductive health programming is fully integrated with HIV and STI prevention and treatment programs. Health service delivery is most effective when individuals can access a range of services in one location.

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