

October 17, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, S-230  
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
The Capitol, H-329  
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader McCarthy,

We are deeply grateful for the incredible leadership you continue to show, steadfastly standing against efforts to weaken pro-life protections, and promoting consistent pro-life policies at home and abroad. However, we wanted to bring to your attention our opposition to the Shaheen amendment to the Senate State and Foreign Operations bill. This amendment was included in the bill reported out of the Appropriations Committee and reflects a change in the status quo with regard to funding associated with abortion.

The Trump administration has made extraordinary progress in implementing pro-life policies internationally, specifically through Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA), the modernized Mexico City Policy. We cannot emphasize enough the significance of ongoing actions taken to implement this policy consistently, removing even indirect funding for abortion overseas.

However, domestic organizations that work overseas are not subject to PLGHA, and some receiving International Family Planning funding under State and Foreign Operations (SFOPs) actively and unapologetically promote abortion. We are deeply concerned by the increase of funds for international family planning in the Senate SFOPs bill, which would provide even more money to these organizations. The following are examples of domestic organizations and the funds received in FY 2018 through International Family Planning:

- **>\$29 million to Pathfinder International**, which “Collaborate[s] with governments in building the capacity of health systems to ensure quality comprehensive abortion services”
- **>\$6.7 million to Population Council**, which touts its work in rural India, demonstrating “the effectiveness of a comprehensive abortion care model”
- **>\$5 million to Engender Health**, which works in Ethiopia “expanding access to comprehensive abortion care”
- **>\$2.2 million to Womancare Global International**, manufacturer and distributor of a surgical abortion device known as Manual Vacuum Aspirator
- **>\$982,000 to PATH**, which works to increase “access to safe abortion in Nepal”

Equally of concern, the Shaheen amendment gives one-sided support to Obama-era discriminatory language and requires one-sided reports regarding USAID family planning programming and pro-life policies. Senator Shaheen’s amendment is clearly designed to undermine the life-saving policies of the Trump administration. While this is not her typical frontal attack on PLGHA, it is no less an attack on the policy and life-affirming recipients of taxpayer dollars.

Senator Shaheen describes the investigations required in her report as intended to “ensure biases by the administration regarding reproductive health do not interfere or alter the delivery of services on the ground.” Of course, what she refers to as bias is, in fact, a policy designed to protect the lives of unborn children who suffer the ultimate bias when they are disregarded as undeserving of legal protection.

The Bipartisan Budget Agreement for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 include specifications for what may or may not be included in appropriations bills. Point number 5 states:

Congressional leaders and the administration agree that, relative to the FY 2019 regular appropriations Acts, there will be no poison pills, additional new riders, additional CHIMPS, or other changes in policy or conventions that allow for higher spending levels, or any non-appropriations measures unless agreed to on a bipartisan basis by the four leaders with the approval of the President.

President Trump's January 18, 2019 letter to Speaker Pelosi specifically condemns House Democratic attacks against Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance, and promises that the President will "veto any legislation that weakens current pro-life Federal policies and laws, or that encourages the destruction of innocent human life at any stage."

On June 18 of this year, the U.S. House of Representatives voted on an amendment to the House SFOPs appropriations bill to strike the increase of international family planning funds. Every voting Republican member supported the amendment, along with two Democratic members, proving that this issue is far from settled.

Finally, on August 1, 2019, twenty-six Senators wrote to the President, thanking him for his prioritization of pro-life policies and his veto threat letter. Regarding the bipartisan budget agreement, they laid out anti-life policies that must be rejected. Included in the list is "earmarked increased funding for international family planning/reproductive health programs."

The Shaheen amendment is a highly controversial, partisan attack on pro-life foreign policy, and must be eliminated in any SFOPs bill going forward. Consistent with the bipartisan budget agreement, we ask that you reject the Shaheen amendment.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Dannenfelser  
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Susan B. Anthony List

Carol Tobias  
President  
National Right to Life Committee

Tom McClusky  
President  
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