

May 3, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As faith-based organizations that believe in the dignity and value of every human life, we write to you with our strong support for family planning and reproductive health funding in the FY24 House State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies (SFOPs) funding bill as it comes before the full committee.

Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH) programming lowers maternal mortality and morbidity rates as well as infant and child death rates. Globally, one-third of women are affected by illness or death due to poor reproductive health. Every year more than half a million women die in childbirth, with over 95% of them in Africa and Asia. The deaths of these women leave behind children that are more vulnerable to disease and death themselves.

The use of voluntary family planning, which gives women and couples the tools to time and space their pregnancies in ways that are consistent with their faith and culture, allows families to have the number of children they wish to have in the healthiest and safest way possible. By spacing pregnancies, women ensure they can recover from a prior pregnancy and that they can breastfeed. Women globally face health challenges such as anemia and undernutrition, making the ability to space pregnancies critical so that each child they have is healthy and can thrive. A USAID analysis found that if pregnancies were spaced by three years, 1.6 million under-5 deaths could be prevented annually.

FP/RH funding also lowers rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and plays a role in reducing mother to child transmission of HIV. When an HIV positive woman has a high viral load, she is much more likely to pass HIV on to her child, and she may wish to use family planning methods at that time. In addition, educating women about their reproductive health is vital to ensuring they know how HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are passed on, allowing them to protect themselves from potentially deadly diseases.

As you may know, family planning funding in SFOPs has not increased for more than a decade, meaning that it has not kept pace with need, inflationary increases, or improvements in family planning methods. These programs have a life-saving impact, and some of our organizations have been partners with USAID in implementing FP/RH grants.

When a woman has children too closely together, too early or too late in life, the health of the mother and baby are at risk. Enabling couples and individuals to determine whether, when and how often to

have children is vital to safe motherhood, healthy families and prosperous communities. We urge you to support robust funding for the Family Planning and Reproductive Health account within Global Health Programs for FY24.

Sincerely,



cc. Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Barbara Lee