



September 6, 2007

**VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE BOXER-SNOWE
AMENDMENT TO THE FY08 STATE, FOREIGN
OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS
APPROPRIATIONS BILL THAT REPEALS THE GLOBAL
GAG RULE**

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Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a nonpartisan public interest organization dedicated to protecting the constitutional rights of individuals, and its hundreds of thousands of activists, members and fifty-three affiliates nationwide, we urge you to support an important amendment that is expected to be offered by Senators Barbara Boxer and Olympia Snowe during floor consideration of the FY08 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The Boxer-Snowe Amendment would repeal the Global Gag Rule – a dangerous, anti-democratic restriction on overseas family planning aid.

The Global Gag Rule prohibits foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive U.S. family planning dollars from using their own -- not U.S. government -- funds to inform the public or educate their government on the need to make safe abortion available, provide legal abortion services, or provide advice on where to get an abortion. It undermines women's health by denying aid money to organizations that provide crucial family planning services simply because these organizations exercise their right to act as advocates and to speak out against laws and policies with which they disagree.

The Global Gag rule should be repealed because it undermines reproductive health care worldwide, greatly harms the world's poorest women, hampers HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, erodes access to contraception and is undemocratic.

The Boxer-Snowe Amendment would promote American values of free speech and democratic participation by ensuring that foreign NGOs are not forced to sacrifice their right to use their own funds to engage in free speech as a condition of eligibility for U.S. aid money. The amendment also protects women's health by ensuring that these organizations can provide their

patients with the comprehensive information they need to make appropriate decisions about their own care.

The ACLU urges you to support the Boxer-Snowe Amendment. It will ensure that international family planning aid is offered in a manner that is consistent with American values and that organizations that provide critical health care services are not inappropriately disqualified from U.S. aid programs.

For further information, contact Vania Leveille at vleveille@dcaclu.org or 202.715.0806.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Caroline Fredrickson,
Director, Washington Legislative Office



Vania Leveille
Legislative Counsel