



What is the Global Gag Rule?

- A U.S. policy that imposes anti abortion restrictions against the use of global health assistance.
- It prevents U.S. agencies and other U.S. institutions from funding organizations that provide abortion services or related information.ⁱ
- Initiated by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, it was invoked by the George W. Bush administration in 2001, and now President Trump in the first weeks of his administration.
- Since 1984, the US Republican Governments have argued that the gag rule aims at reducing cases of abortion but results of studies in this policy prove otherwise.

What strides has Uganda made in the absence of the Gag rule?

- The Costed Implementation Plan for Family Planning 2015-2020 (CIP) which indicates the government's commitment to improve access to family planning as a low cost, high dividend investment for addressing the high maternal mortality ratio.ⁱⁱ
- A considerably lower risk of a mother dying in the health facility while giving birth which is at 146 per 100,000 live births as of 2015 down from 168 per 100,000 live births in 2013.ⁱⁱⁱ
- A relative reduction in infant mortality from 87 deaths per 1,000 live births as of 2002 to 53 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014.^{iv}

What would be the likely Impact of the Rule?

- It intends to reduce funding for organizations that have been providing a wide range of family planning services including counseling thereby impacting on sustainability of these projects.^v
- It reduces access to family planning thereby denying women an opportunity to space their children, determine the number of children they want to have.
- It reduces access to the commonly used contraceptives including condoms, Intra Uterine Devices (IUDs), and birth pills, among others.

- Uncertainty among organizations and the donor community with an interest of providing, adjudicating and advocating for maternal health but depend on funding from US agencies such as USAID.
- A significant reduction in the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) budget, thereby exerting pressure on Uganda's family planning initiatives.
- A drastic increase in the rate of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.
- A high rate of clandestine unsafe abortions resulting into complications that will lead to maternal morbidity and mortality.
- An increase in HIV and AIDS infections due to limited access to condoms leading to death given a deficit in access to drugs that the rule will create.

What are the available opportunities for Uganda?

- Apportioning more funds for SRH in the budget for financial year 2017/18.
- The Global Financing Facility Grant that Uganda wrote and other grants and foreign health assistance from other partner states.
- Government also must analyze regional and global trends and plan to ensure that progress made in SRH is not lost.

ⁱThe White House. *Presidential Memorandum Regarding the Mexico City Policy*. Jan 23, 2017. <https://whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/23/presidential-memorandum-regarding-mexico-city-policy> (accessed Jan 30, 2017).

ⁱⁱ Ministry of Health. *Annual Health Sector Performance Report for Financial Year 2014/2015*. Kampala, Uganda: MoH, 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v PAI. *Trump's global gag rule dramatically expands harmful health impacts*. Jan 25, 2017. <http://pai.org/newsletters/stroke-pen-trumps-global-gag-rule-dramatically-expands-harmful-health-impacts/> (accessed Jan 30, 2017).