House Democrats Push for a Repeal of the Mexico City Policy

*Behind the border wall debate, Pelosi and the Party of abortion are on the move*

Jonathan Abbamonte / January 23, 2019

While our nation is distracted by the hue and cry over border security, the newly installed Democrat majority in the House of Representatives has quietly voted to repeal President Trump’s “Mexico City Policy.”

“Speaker Pelosi and company are eager to resume funding organizations like International Planned Parenthood Federation that perform or promote abortion in foreign countries,” says Population Research Institute President Steven Mosher. “This despite the fact that most Americans want nothing to do with funding abortion in the U.S., much less overseas.”

On January 3rd, House Democrats passed H.R. 21, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, the government’s 2019 budget bill. As much publicized, the bill does not include funding for the President’s border wall. However, the bill also repeals the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance Policy, the official name of the Trump Administration’s version of the “Mexico City Policy.” The House passed H.R. 21 on a mostly party-line vote of 241 to 190.

The Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) Policy prevents U.S. foreign assistance from funding the global abortion industry. PLGHA prohibits foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from receiving U.S. global health assistance if they lobby for, refer for, perform, advertise for, or promote abortion in foreign countries or if they provide funding to other foreign NGOs that participate in these activities. NGOs in the U.S. that receive foreign assistance funding are also barred from sub-granting these funds to pro-abortion foreign NGOs.

The new Mexico City Policy has already cut millions of dollars to foreign abortion groups...
including the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Marie Stopes International (MSI). In 2016, IPPF affiliates alone performed over 1 million abortions worldwide, while MSI subsidiaries performed over 3.6 million abortions and post-abortion care services that same year. According to IPPF, the Trump administration’s Mexico City Policy will deprive the organization of nearly $100 million in U.S. foreign assistance funding.

In a video address to the March for Life in Washington, D.C., last Friday, the President announced that he will veto any bill that weakens federal law or policies that protect human life at all stages. The same day, the President signed a letter to this effect, informing Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, that he will veto any anti-life bill, including H.R. 21.

“I 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,” the President’s letter read.

President Trump also roundly condemned H.R. 21, saying that its provisions repealing the Mexico City Policy would “reverse a critical protection against taxpayer funding for the global abortion industry.”

“The President is a man of his word,” says Mosher. “This presidency is the best opportunity that we have had since Reagan to greatly reduce the number of abortions in America and around the world.”

Current federal law grants the president the authority to establish funding restrictions on foreign health assistance, “on such terms and conditions as he may determine,”[1] including by cutting funding to organizations that perform or promote abortion.

The House’s new budget bill, H.R. 21, would strip the president of this authority. H.R. 21 would prohibit the administration from disqualifying organizations applying for foreign aid grants on the basis that they provide “health or medical services” that are not illegal in other countries and that “would not violate United States law if provided in the United States.”[2] Because abortion is legal on demand in the United States, this provision would prevent the president from enforcing the Mexico City Policy.

President Trump had reinstated the Mexico City Policy as one of his first acts as president on January 23, 2017. First instated by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, the Mexico City Policy was in effect during the Reagan and First and Second Bush administrations and for one year during the Clinton administration. Presidents Clinton and Obama both quickly rescinded the policy during their terms in office. The Mexico City Policy has been in effect for 20 of the last 35 years.
The Trump administration’s version of the Mexico City Policy is a considerable expansion over earlier versions of the policy. While previous versions of the only applied to U.S. family planning assistance, the Mexico City Policy under President Trump was extended to all global health assistance provided by the U.S. Government. Moreover, while previous versions of the policy applied only to U.S. foreign aid distributed by the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Trump version of the policy applies to all departments and agencies of the federal government.

Foreign assistance for family planning and reproductive health programs are funded by Congress with a minimum appropriation of $575 million per year. Foreign assistance data analysis conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that the federal government over the past two years has provided approximately $608 million annually for family planning assistance. It is primarily this area of funding which the former Mexico City Policy had applied to under previous administrations. By contrast, Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance applies to all global health assistance programming. The Department of State estimates that the new policy is applicable to a total of $8.8 billion worth of U.S. foreign assistance, including the programs funded by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

According to the Population Research Institute’s analysis of U.S. foreign aid data, had the Trump administration’s Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance Policy been in place from 2013 to 2016, IPPF, MSI, and their affiliates would have collectively been denied up to $190 million in U.S. foreign assistance funding.[3]

Pro-life lawmakers in the House and Senate are firmly behind the President’s promised veto of H.R. 21. Last week, 169 lawmakers in the House of Representatives led by Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey, and 49 Senators led by Sen. Steve Daines of Montana, sent letters encouraging the President to veto any bill that weakens or repeals federal policies on abortion or abortion funding, including the Mexico City Policy. The lawmakers further pledged to sustain the President’s veto on any legislation that weakens pro-life policies.

An overwhelming majority of Americans are in favor of the President’s Mexico City Policy. A Knights of Columbus/Marist poll earlier this month found that a full 75% of Americans either oppose or strongly oppose using tax dollars to pay for abortion in other countries.


[3] Analysis to be released in a forthcoming report. Figure assuming that all IPPF and MSI affiliates would have refused to comply with the policy. Data drawn from U.S. Department of State, Office of Foreign Assistance Resources, the Foreign Assistance Dashboard, www.foreignassistance.gov; USAspending.gov, including data that may be provided by Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., https://www.usaspending.gov/#/.