

Statement by Belle Taylor-McGhee, President and CEO, Pacific Institute for Women's Health, on President Obama's Repeal of the Mexico City Policy (the global gag rule)

For the last eight years, women's health has been under a shroud of deceptive policies due to ideology that put politics ahead of women's health and evidence-based research. Today, President Obama set a new course by rescinding the draconian Mexico City Policy, which prohibited non-governmental organizations from receiving U.S. funds if they provide access to abortion or any information about abortion.

We congratulate President Obama for his leadership in reversing this rule in the first days of his presidency, and for elevating women's health to an urgent priority for our nation and the world. We are also encouraged by the renewed funding for the United Nations Population Fund, which works to reduce the need for abortion by promoting voluntary family planning in more than 150 poor countries.

One day after the 36th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, this nation is being steered back on course to enact policies that are sound and effective at protecting women's health and increasing access to life-saving information and services. Although, a win for us today, it is important that we not rest on our laurels.

We are fully aware that there is still a lack of funding for proactive public policies that address HIV/AIDS and its devastating attack on women's health. And among girls, there is a high and continuing incidence of STIs – affecting 1 in 4 girls in the U.S. Additionally, access to birth control and emergency contraception has become less affordable, and in some cases, out of reach for many American women.

The Pacific Institute for Women's Health is united with our partners and allies to set a new agenda for reproductive health, so that women and girls have the ability and the opportunity to make informed decisions about their sexuality and reproductive health.