



## **Explaining the Trump Administration's New Expanded Global Gag Rules**

In January 2026, the Trump Administration released three final rules - under the guise of "Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance" (PHFFA) - that dramatically expand the Global Gag Rule to weaponize foreign assistance and force compliance with the administration's extremist, ideological agenda. A policy repeatedly rescinded by Democratic presidents and reinstated by Republican presidents since 1984, the Global Gag Rule historically prohibited foreign organizations receiving U.S. funding from providing information, services, or referrals for abortion services - even with their own money. Extended to cover all of global health assistance during the Trump Administration's first term and reinstated in January 2025, the policy will now apply to new funding, new entities, and new activities. The rules are entitled "[Protecting Life in Foreign Assistance](#)" (PLIFA), "[Combating Gender Ideology in Foreign Assistance](#)" (CGIFA), and "[Combating Discriminatory Equity Ideology in Foreign Assistance](#)" (CDEIFA).

Under previous iterations of the policy which focused on abortion, the Global Gag Rule caused widespread harm to the health and rights of women and [LGBTQI+ people](#) around the globe. With this expansion, the resulting impacts of the policy will be even more devastating, undermining human rights and access to lifesaving services across the international system.

### **New Funding Streams: What is Impacted?**

The new rules apply to all non-military foreign assistance funding in the form of grants, cooperative agreements, and voluntary contributions from the Department of State. This includes, but is not limited to, global health programs, humanitarian assistance, economic and development assistance, stabilization assistance, civil society and democracy programming, migration and refugee assistance, and voluntary contributions to international organizations.

Previously, the Global Gag Rule only applied to family planning and reproductive health funding and was subsequently expanded to apply to all U.S. global health assistance.

### **New Entities: Who is Covered?**

Under the new rules, restrictions will now apply to foreign non-governmental organizations, U.S. non-governmental organizations, foreign governments and parastatals, and international organizations. The scope of the speech and service restrictions varies between entities for legal reasons - foreign NGOs and international organizations face the most restrictions while foreign governments and parastatals face the least, with U.S. NGOs facing an extremely complicated combination.

Previously, the Global Gag Rule only applied to foreign non-governmental organizations.

### **New Activities: What is Covered?**

The expanded Global Gag Rules will now restrict new activities to reflect the Trump administration's January 2025 anti-trans and anti-DEI Executive Orders. The new rules prohibit entities receiving foreign assistance from supporting, directly or indirectly, the promotion of so-called "gender ideology" or "discriminatory equity ideology." Definitions for these activities under both CGIFA and CDEIFA are a threat to the lives of transgender, nonbinary, and intersex persons, racial and ethnic minorities, women, and other marginalized groups.

Under previous iterations of the Global Gag Rule, only abortion-related restrictions were in place.

#### *Defining the "Promotion of Gender Ideology"*

The language of CGIFA is broad and far-reaching, prohibiting the provision and promotion of activities that support "sex-rejecting procedures," defined as any pharmaceutical or surgical intervention to affirm one's gender identity, and "sex-rejecting social transition." Notably, social transition includes anything pertaining to the acknowledgement of gender identity, and can include psychological or psychiatric counseling or treatment by a counselor or other provider; modifying a person's name or pronouns; calling a person "nonbinary"; use of accommodations such as bathrooms or locker rooms; participating in athletic competitions or other activities; and the use of non-medical interventions, such as binders.

CGIFA's language with respect to "sex-rejecting procedures" would restrict the provision and promotion of accurate, evidence-based, and age appropriate health care information for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals, even with the organization's own money. This would force clinics to choose between receiving U.S. foreign assistance funding or providing these medical services - including counselling, information, or referrals - to transgender, nonbinary, or intersex individuals. Notably, the new rule allows for any "sex-rejecting procedures" for any reason other than to provide services to transgender or nonbinary individuals. There remains a carveout for medically unnecessary surgeries on intersex individuals.

Of great concern, the rule will also gag entities that advocate or engage with foreign governments on legal and policy issues related to transgender, nonbinary, and intersex persons, even to defend existing laws, such as those protecting legal gender recognition. As a result, entities that accept the restrictions will be prohibited from engaging policymakers on laws that may criminalize transgender identities or health care services, as well as those that seek to prohibit violence on the basis of one's gender identity.

Entities would also be prohibited from running public education campaigns to inform the public about transgender, nonbinary, or intersex persons, nor would they be able to use or teach with education materials that include information on gender identity, including the use of pronouns. Finally, the rule explicitly prohibits drag queen workshops, performances, or documentaries.

### *Defining the “Promotion of Discriminatory Equity Ideology”*

Under CDEIFA, entities must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin in violation of U.S. laws, and are prohibited from promoting “discriminatory equity ideology”, which is defined as an ideology that treats individuals as members of preferred or disfavored groups, rather than as individuals, and minimizes agency, merit, and capability in favor of generalization on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Under the Trump administration’s definition, this would include acknowledging systemic discrimination, stigma, or oppression on the basis of the above characteristics, undermining key programming or discussion of equality practices.

The language of the CDEIFA defines promotion of discriminatory equity ideology as including “using or teaching education materials (including books, curricula, and media) that advance this ideology.” and might extend to prohibiting entities from engaging in practices to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. The CDEIFA rule goes so far as to also prohibit speech that would note that the “United States is fundamentally racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory.”

Of note, during the review and termination of foreign assistance programs in 2025, a majority of programs that were cancelled were justified under the argument that the program itself promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion due to its specific focus on a targeted subpopulation. As a result, the CDEIFA language could have broad ramifications on programs that are meant to reach all minority groups within a country itself.

### **Timing: When Will the Policy Take Effect?**

The rule is effective February 26, 2026. The new provisions will be incorporated into grants and cooperative agreements when new funds are added, as well as into new awards.

### **Projected Impacts**

The new Global Gag Rules - which will impact [nearly \\$40 billion](#) in U.S. foreign assistance funding - will have a devastating impact on the health and lives of millions around the world. It will force entities to choose between receiving U.S. foreign assistance and providing a full range of services to minority populations around the world, including support for their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Under previous iterations of the policy, abortion rates and HIV infections increased and clinics around the globe were shuttered, reducing access to key health services for women, girls, and LGBTQI+ people. The drastic expansion of this policy, in combination with the already reduced global health infrastructure caused by the destruction of USAID, will only compound these issues, cutting many off from lifesaving health care.