Men Who Defend Women’s Rights
Dear Pathfinders,

One day after Donald Trump’s inauguration, I joined with more than half a million women and men in Washington, DC—and millions more around the globe—to send a loud and clear message to our new administration: women’s rights are human rights. Just two days later, President Trump signed an executive order re-imposing and expanding the Global Gag Rule. This harmful policy forces our local partners to choose between receiving US funding and providing comprehensive reproductive health information, care, and services. The policy puts women’s lives at risk and could set back the clock on sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world.

In my own life, I’ve never had to face institutional and cultural barriers to accessing contraception. I’ve never had to risk my life to exercise my rights. But for millions of women and girls around the world, these rights are out of reach.

I’ve been an advocate all my life. Fighting for equality is my career and my passion. I’m driven by the unwavering conviction that all people, everywhere, have the right to access the care they want and need, without fear or boundary, and the right to choose whether and when to have children. Those rights must be upheld.

Now more than ever, it’s vital that we speak up—for ourselves, for women and girls everywhere, and for those whose voices have been silenced. We can’t accept the Global Gag Rule or what it represents.

Here’s what you can do, today, to stand up for sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world.

Senator Jeanne Shaheen and Congresswoman Nita Lowey have introduced the Global Health, Empowerment and Rights (HER) Act. With House and Senate support, this bill would legislatively repeal the global gag rule.

It’s time to put an end to this dangerous policy. You can help make that happen by urging your Members of Congress to become cosponsors of the Global HER Act (S. 210 and H.R. 671). Your opinion matters to your representatives. Make sure they know where you stand on women’s health and rights.

Your advocacy has never been more important. Raise your voice today with Pathfinders around the world. RAISE YOUR VOICE for access, choice, and equality.

In partnership,

Kiki Kalkstein
Senior Policy Analyst

You can help uphold sexual and reproductive health and rights around the globe by urging your Members of Congress to support the Global HER Act. Speak out now.

Get started here: pathfinder.org/GlobalHER
A Leader Takes a Stand

In Mozambique, one man is uniting his community to end violence against women.

“We have had a lot of violence here,” says Humberto Julai Novela. He stands in the shade near a circle of chairs, waiting for the neighborhood men’s meeting to start. “We need to act.”

Humberto is a community leader. Last year, activists came to his Chokwe neighborhood to bring women together to talk about contraception. Humberto saw an opportunity. “I told them, why not have male groups? I could organize them!”

He took part in Pathfinder training sessions and began to lead men’s groups. Contraception was just the start. His group also talks about healthy communication and decisions in relationships—especially the problem of violence against women. His neighbors know he’s always available. “If they wake me up at night with some issue related to violence, I don’t want to leave it for the following day,” Humberto explains.

Changing attitudes about violence is a long process. But breaking the silence is the first step. “Men come to me to apologize for what they did before,” Humberto says. “They’re starting to see that it’s wrong.”

A few more neighbors sit down to join him. Another meeting is about to begin. “Things are beginning to change,” says Humberto.

As a Pathfinder supporter, you know that women and girls everywhere have the right to equality, safety, and respect. “Gender-based violence is very common here,” says Estrella Alcalde, a Pathfinder expert in Mozambique. “It’s viewed as a private family matter, and it’s kept quiet. We have to change that.” Together—from your support to Humberto’s leadership—we are breaking down barriers to uphold women’s rights in Mozambique and around the world.

By supporting this work, you’re bringing safety and rights to women everywhere. Thank you.
Sirajuddin is worried about the future of his community. “I run Al-Falah Model Senior Secondary School. Whenever I can, I get involved in activities to make our children and their families aware of health issues.”

Qari Sirajuddin is a Muslim religious leader from a rural district in Haryana, India. His school is surrounded by plots of arid farmland, where people struggle to earn a living. Crops rely on rain, and it doesn’t rain enough. Dust storms are common.

“We have a lot of problems related to maternal and child health,” Sirajuddin says. “Women and their children are always in danger. That is normal here.”

This is the devastating list of what he means by normal:

1. **Early marriage.**
   “Girls are often married around age 15 or 16,” he says.

2. **Illiteracy among women.**
   Only 37% of women can read and write. 70% of men can.

3. **Unsafe delivery.**
   Most rural women give birth at home—and over a third of them without any skilled health provider to save their lives if something goes wrong.

4. **A lack of family planning.**
   More than half of all rural women want to delay or stop having children but aren’t using contraception.

Do they know they have a choice?

“Until girls are educated and the quality of health services improves,” says Sirajuddin strongly, “it will be difficult to change this situation.”
“We decided to use family planning because it means we can better care for our children,” says Altaf.

“My husband accompanies me to the hospital for the injection. We go together!” says Asmeena.

“I did not know about family planning before.”

By age 28, Asmeena has been pregnant nine times. Not all her children survived. Thanks to you, Asmeena now has a choice. She is one of thousands of women using injectable contraceptives for the first time through our program. Her husband, Altaf, supports her — encouraged by health workers and community leaders trained by Pathfinder.
A First for India

In 2015, Pathfinder set out to do something that had never been done before. We partnered with the government of Haryana to make injectable contraceptives available for free to women at public health facilities—a first for India.

To date, through our program, over 5,900 women are using injectable contraceptives for the first time. We’ve helped train hundreds of doctors and nurses and thousands of frontline health workers to serve them. Women are gaining access to contraception—and the support of their partners to use it.

“It’s a victory for reproductive rights in our country,” says Dr. Ghazala Shaheen, a lead member of Pathfinder’s team in India. “And men helped make it possible.”

Reproductive rights are women's rights.

It’s her health that’s directly affected. But unless we involve male partners, we will not have the strong results we know are possible.”

— DR. GHAZALA SHAHEEN, PATHFINDER INDIA

Want to know one of the differences we found between women who continued to use injectable contraception and women who dropped out after the first or second dose? Supportive husbands.

“In these villages, men are the decision makers,” says Dr. Ghazala. “Our team shares information about contraception with husbands and fathers during home visits. We share knowledge with male religious leaders like Sirajuddin, who have the power to show people that their religion supports family planning. Family planning saves lives.”

Using Your Influence for Good

Today, Sirajuddin plays an important new role in his community.

“Islam is never against healthy spacing of children,” he says. “It is because of illiteracy and lack of knowledge that some people think so. I will reach them with our message.”

Education and health care—that’s his formula for a better future. It’s Pathfinder’s too.

“This project is very good!” he exclaims. “It is creating awareness among the masses. Even for me, my knowledge has improved. Now I tell people to marry at an appropriate age, space your children, plan for a child—when you want. And when that child is born, think of how to give your child the best upbringing.”

The school day ends. Sirajuddin watches his students stream toward home.

“Give them education. Keep them healthy.”

Your support does remarkable things. Thanks to you the future looks brighter for women and girls and their new allies in the fight for contraceptive choice.

Dr. Ghazala counsels women on contraception
You Have Made History

2017 marks Pathfinder’s 60th Anniversary. It’s time to look back and celebrate how far your support has taken us. Thank you for turning your passion for equality, access, and choice into an enduring legacy.

Together, we can transform lives for another 60 years.

Iran 1967
Community outreach workers visited tea shops to share information about family planning and reproductive health with men.

Ethiopia 1966
Pathfinder provided seed money to the first Ethiopian organization to open a family planning clinic. Staff described being confronted at gunpoint by husbands, accused of giving contraceptives to their wives without their permission.

Bangladesh 1979
For the first time, women and men received contraceptive information and methods in their communities—an approach we use to this day.

Friends of Pathfinder