



January 20, 2022

BUILDING REPRO BACK BETTER: A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY AND CRISIS



Planned Parenthood Action Fund

I. INTRO

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris took office in January 2021 amidst an enormous global health crisis and a nationwide reckoning related to racism and white supremacy.

They also faced the need to clean up four years of damage done by the previous administration, protect and advance our democracy, and to lead a nation reeling from a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol just days earlier. During their first year in office, the Biden-Harris administration took a number of steps to advance health and gender equity. That includes efforts to safeguard and expand sexual and reproductive health care, protect sexual and reproductive rights and bodily autonomy, and address one of the leading public health threats of our lifetime – the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the battle for reproductive health care, rights, and justice are inextricably interwoven. In the midst of the pandemic, sexual and reproductive health care providers face partisan attacks, compounded by threats to safety net funding due to state and federal budgetary shortfalls. It is no coincidence that attacks on voting rights and democracy go hand-in-hand with attacks on sexual and reproductive health care and rights, including – but not limited to – abortion.

Black and Indigenous women and other people of color, immigrants, LGBTQI+ people, people with disabilities, young people, and people who sit at the intersections of those identities, have borne the brunt of hostility and regressive policies for centuries.

The pandemic has only magnified the access issues caused by attacks to sexual and reproductive health care. In fact, one in three women have either delayed or canceled an appointment for reproductive health care or have experienced challenges in receiving birth control since the start of the public health crisis. Globally, UNFPA, the United Nations' sexual and reproductive health agency, estimates that contraceptive access was disrupted for about 12 million women in 115 low and middle income countries during the first year of the pandemic. Not only is birth control access more limited, but fewer women are receiving recommended annual wellness exams, cervical and breast cancer screenings, STI and HIV testing and treatment, and other essential care.

At the same time, in the nearly 50 years since the Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade*, the constitutional right to abortion in the U.S. has never been so imperiled. In September, Texas essentially banned abortion after six weeks of pregnancy – a time at which many people don't even know that they're pregnant. The new law put private citizens, rather than the state, in charge of enforcing the law through vigilante lawsuits, and was designed that way in order to evade court review of the law's constitutionality. In September, the Supreme Court allowed the law to take effect, and in December, the Supreme Court permitted it to remain so, a horrific outcome for the people of Texas and an ominous sign for what is to come. Every day, Texans in need of health care are denied their right to abortion or are forced to travel out of state at considerable expense and inconvenience to access this essential health care.

Also in December, the Supreme Court heard a case about Mississippi's pre-viability 15-week abortion ban, and a majority of the Court seemed inclined to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which could result in [26 states banning abortion and more than 36 million people losing access to abortion](#) in their states. A decision in that case is expected in June. These actions stand in stark contrast to the rest of the world, where more countries have liberalized their abortion laws in the last year, including Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, San Marino, and Benin.

But we also know that for years, policies such as the Hyde Amendment and state restrictions have chipped away at the right to abortion, creating numerous hoops for patients and providers to jump through and putting abortion out of reach for many, even though they technically still have a right to abortion.

It's no coincidence that these regressive reproductive health care policies are being pushed alongside voter suppression bills and anti-transgender policies – all disproportionately harming people of color, women, people with low incomes, and LGBTQI+ people. While many of these states have repeatedly failed to take critical and recommended steps to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, state politicians continue to wage a relentless attack on basic rights and freedoms, including abortion and voting rights – all in an effort to cling to power and control our bodies, our vote, our lives, and our futures.

Therefore, the Biden-Harris administration faced unprecedented challenges to our health and rights in its first year. Among some of the notable strides that the administration made in this regard:

- Rescinding the global gag rule.
- Issuing executive orders and memoranda prioritizing sexual and reproductive health and rights domestically and globally, as well as strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.
- Establishing the White House Gender Policy Council and issuing the first-ever National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality.
- Issuing executive orders to ensure equity in COVID-19 response and championing racial justice as a key component of the White House agenda across federal agencies.
- Championing LGBTQI+ rights, including recognizing gender identity and sexual orientation as part of gender.
- Issuing a White House budget request to increase investment in family planning/Title X and international family planning programs, and to eliminate the Hyde Amendment and the D.C. abortion ban.
- Restoring U.S. contributions to UNFPA and making the first ever U.S. contribution to the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, the largest provider of contraceptive commodities worldwide.
- Halting implementation of onerous and medically unnecessary restrictions on medication abortion during the COVID-19 pandemic; and announcing their permanent removal.
- Reversing harmful rules on the Title X family planning program and abortion coverage through the Affordable Care Act marketplaces.
- Issuing an Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting.
- Expanding access to maternal health coverage and taking notable steps to address the maternal health crisis.
- Resuming annual reporting on the status of reproductive rights worldwide.
- Going to court to protect the constitutional right to abortion.
- Installing sexual and reproductive health and rights champions throughout federal agencies.
- Committing to pursue global gender equality on behalf of the U.S. government across several priority areas of domestic and foreign policy.



As we work together to rebuild from the devastation of the pandemic, the economic crisis, and centuries of systemic racism, reproductive health, rights, and justice cannot be an afterthought.

For women, Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, LGBTQ+ people, young people, and people with low incomes, personal freedom and access to health care is the foundation of a better future. It's how we build families, careers, and communities.

Across the country and around the world, the Trump administration robbed countless people of the right to control their own bodies and access sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion.

The Biden-Harris administration must undo the harm of Trump policies and expand access to sexual and reproductive health care, starting by:

- 1 Revoking the global gag rule and providing clarity on the law to restore and extend health care, including abortion care, across the globe.
- 2 Rescinding the domestic gag rule on Title X, the nation's program dedicated to affordable birth control; the refusal-of-care rule; rules that restrict the ACA birth control coverage benefit; and other rules that limit access to sexual and reproductive health care.
- 3 Lifting medically unnecessary restrictions on medication abortion that expose patients to needless risk during the pandemic.
- 4 Issuing a budget proposal to end the discriminatory and racist Hyde, Weldon, and Helms amendments to expand access to abortion for people with low incomes.

The Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights & Justice represents more than 90 organizations united for sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice.

[Learn more at ReproBlueprint.org.](https://reproblueprint.org)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT
Advocates for Youth, In Our Own Voice, National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, National Women's Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Power to Decide

More than 90 global and domestic advocacy organizations came together to create the [Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice](https://reproblueprint.org) laying out our vision for an incoming administration in 2021 and beyond.

II. FIRST 100 DAYS

The Biden-Harris administration immediately got to work to undo the harm of the previous administration and to address the multiple public health crises facing the nation. President Biden issued a number of executive orders and presidential memos laying out his commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights and directing federal agencies to prioritize these issues.

In the first days of his presidency, the president:

- reversed the global gag rule,
- directed the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) to [reconsider the Title X gag rule](#),
- directed federal agencies to [strengthen Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act](#),
- made racial equity a priority, promoted [access to voting](#), and
- [established protections for LGBTQI+ people](#), including recognizing that discrimination based on gender identity is sex discrimination.



The president also directed the Secretary of State to restore funding for UNFPA. The administration announced the withdrawal of the U.S. from the so-called Geneva Consensus Declaration, a statement endorsed by over 30 countries aimed at advancing an anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQI+ agenda. The rejection of this and the report of the Commission on Unalienable Rights sends an important, public signal to countries and communities around the world that the U.S., and the Biden-Harris administration, will support critical human rights frameworks and collaborate with the global community to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to abortion. Additionally, the president established the [first ever White House Gender Policy Council](#) to implement a strategy for gender equity – including sexual and reproductive health care – across federal agencies.

BIDEN-HARRIS FIRST 100 DAYS PROGRESS REPORT	
✓	Rescinded the global gag rule.
✓	Issued executive orders and memorandum prioritizing reproductive health domestically and globally, as well as strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.
✓	Established the White House Gender Policy Council.
✓	Prioritized equity in COVID-19 response and championed racial justice as a key component of agenda across federal agencies.
✓	Restored funding for and increased partnership with UNFPA.
✓	Lifted FDA's in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone during the public health emergency.
✓	Began process to build back the Title X program.
✓	Began process to strengthen and roll back attacks on the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid.
✓	Championed LGBTQI+ rights, including recognizing gender and sexual orientation as part of gender.
✓	Began the process of halting harmful Trump proposals that would have further restricted access to sexual and reproductive health care and rights.
✓	FDA started reviewing science and medical evidence regarding REMS on mifepristone.

Vice President Kamala Harris @VP
United States government official

We are in a maternal health crisis, especially for Black and Native American women. Today I gathered maternal care professionals, mothers, advocates and elected leaders for the first-ever @WhiteHouse Maternal Health Summit.



7:35 PM · Dec 7, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

The White House @WhiteHouse

Today, President Biden furthered his commitment to protecting women's health care by issuing a Presidential Memorandum. The memorandum immediately rescinds the global gag rule and takes steps to protect and expand access to reproductive health care.



4:21 PM · Jan 28, 2021 · The White House

White House Gender Policy Council @WhiteHouseGPC

Today, the @VP and the Gender Policy Council will meet with abortion & reproductive health providers and patients from TX, MS, KY, & NM to discuss the impact of TX SB 8 and other care restrictions. Here is what to expect at today's meeting



glamour.com
Kamala Harris Will Welcome Abortion Providers and Patients to the White House
A new Texas law has made abortion almost completely illegal in Texas. Vice President Harris is sitting down with abortion providers and patients to talk about...

3:26 PM · Sep 9, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield @USAmbUN
United States government official

Reproductive rights are human rights. Glad to see @UNFPA in Jordan is providing reproductive healthcare and safe spaces for victims of gender-based violence with U.S. support.



UNFPA and 3 others

2:06 PM · Nov 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

President Biden @POTUS
United States government official

Today, I issued a Presidential Memorandum to protect and expand access to reproductive health care. I am fully committed to protecting women's health here at home and around the world.

7:45 PM · Jan 28, 2021 · The White House

Wendy R. Sherman @DeputySecState

I met with @UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem @Atayeshe to discuss empowering women and girls and #SRHR. The U.S. is making our first contribution to @UNFPA_Supplies to provide modern contraceptives and maternal health medicine to women affected by humanitarian emergencies.



9:10 PM · Nov 1, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Vice President Kamala Harris @VP
United States government official

In the United States of America, the right of women to make decisions about their own bodies is non-negotiable. For nearly 50 years, this right has been protected. Yesterday's Supreme Court decision allows SB8, which threatens women's health and rights, to remain in effect.



12:00 PM · Dec 11, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Vice President Kamala Harris @VP
United States government official

We will use every lever of our Administration to defend the right to safe and legal abortion—and to strengthen that right.



whitehouse.gov
Statement by Vice President Kamala Harris on Supreme Court Ruling on Texas La...
Last night, the Supreme Court threatened nearly 50 years of legal precedent, dealing a significant blow to Roe v. Wade and the right of women to make

7:03 PM · Sep 2, 2021 · Twitter Web App

State Department: Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor @StateDRL

Today, the @StateDept demonstrates its commitment to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights [#SRHR] by reinstating #ReproductiveRights to the 2020 Human Rights Reports.

Read about these and other human rights issues here: [state.gov/reports/2020-c...](#)



2:07 PM · Nov 4, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Secretary Xavier Becerra @SecBecerra

Every American deserves access to health care no matter where they live – including access to safe and legal abortions.

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure @BrooksLaSureCMS

We applaud states that take the crucial step to expand postpartum coverage for pregnant people in #Medicaid & #CHIP & encourage every state to take this opportunity to improve postpartum care, address health disparities, & improve health outcomes among underserved communities.

1:30 PM · Dec 7, 2021 · Twitter Web App

White House Gender Policy Council @WhiteHouseGPC

Today, the Biden-Harris Administration released the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality.

III. PRESIDENT BIDEN'S FIRST BUDGET PROPOSAL

In May, President Biden released the [first budget proposal](#) of his presidency. Through the budget proposal, President Biden demonstrated a commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights domestically and globally, including the proposed elimination of the discriminatory Hyde Amendment, which for decades has denied people with Medicaid coverage for abortion.

This first step toward what would truly be a historic advance for equity in abortion access would not have been possible without the tireless work and advocacy of people of color and our partners in the Reproductive Justice community.

The president's budget also proposed to eliminate the restriction on the District of Columbia using its own locally raised tax dollars to provide abortion coverage for people with Medicaid. Ultimately, it is Congress that must pass a federal appropriations bill without these harmful measures.

Unfortunately, the budget proposal maintains other abortion coverage restrictions, including for people in federal prisons, federal employees, and Peace Corps volunteers. It also maintains the Weldon and Helms Amendments, the latter of which impedes abortion access in other countries, even where it is legal.

Other inclusions critical to sexual and reproductive health care:

- **Title X:** The budget proposed \$340 million for Title X funding, an increase over current levels but inadequate to fully fund the program.
- **Domestic health care funding:** The budget proposed significant investments in public health agencies and programs that would improve access to care and coverage: funding for HHS at \$133.7 billion; eliminating Medicaid funding caps for Puerto Rico and territories and align their federal matching rate with states; a public option Medicaid-“look-alike” for people living in states that have not expanded Medicaid; setting aside \$16.26 billion for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP); and significant increases in HIV and STI funding.
- **Global sexual and reproductive health care funding:** The budget proposed \$583.7 million for bilateral international family planning programs, a modest \$8 million increase after more than a decade of flat funding. The budget also provided a \$56 million contribution to UNFPA – a significant and welcome increase after the previous administration withheld all funding from the reproductive health agency.
- **Significant investments to advance health equity:** The budget proposed an increase in funding for Indian Health Services by \$2.2 billion and providing \$153 million for CDC’s Social Determinants of Health program to support States and Territories to improve health equity and data collection for racial and ethnic populations.



IV. WHITE HOUSE GENDER POLICY COUNCIL CREATION AND STRATEGY

The Biden-Harris administration [released](#) the first-ever national strategy to advance gender equity and equality in the U.S. and around the world. Led by the White House Gender Policy Council, this strategy critically recognizes health, including sexual and reproductive health, as a core pillar of achieving gender equity. Planned Parenthood was especially pleased to see the strategy highlight the need to defend the right to abortion, promote access to sexual and reproductive health and rights both at home and abroad, end the Hyde Amendment, end the global gag rule, guarantee people the right to see the health care provider of their choice, and invest in sex education in the U.S. and around the world.



The strategy was issued in response to President Biden’s [Executive Order](#) issued in March of 2021 that created the Gender Policy Council and directed it to create the strategy. PPFA and PPAF advocated through memos and meetings with the White House Gender Policy Council for the inclusion of our issues in the strategy. The strategy is a great additional tool to push the Biden-Harris administration to do more, especially in response to S.B. 8 and other state restrictions on access to sexual and reproductive health care, including Medicaid defunding. We will [use the strategy](#) in our advocacy as a dictate from the White House to all federal agencies to advance critical gender equity policies, including those related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

V. ADVOCATING AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO BIRTH CONTROL AND ABORTION

In addition to making policy and regulatory changes to advance access to reproductive health care, President Biden, Vice President Harris, and other members of the administration used their platform to speak out about the need for abortion and to oppose state restrictions. Notably, the administration issued a [Statement of Administration Policy](#) in support of the Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA), legislation which would invalidate state restrictions that make it harder for people to access abortion. This critical demonstration of public support aligned with a historic House vote on WHPA in an effort to provide additional federal protections to the right to safe, legal abortion.

Title X Reproductive Health Program

As one of its biggest commitments to sexual and reproductive health, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) took less than a year to end the harmful Title X gag rule. As the nation’s only federal program dedicated to providing affordable birth control and other reproductive health care to people with low incomes, Title X is a critical piece of our social safety net that can, and should, help ensure equitable access to essential health care. Prior to the Title X gag rule, more than 4 million people depended on the sexual and reproductive health care services provided through Title X each year. Title X grants fund health care services like birth control, contraceptive counseling, STI treatment, breast and cervical cancer screenings, pre-pregnancy care, and more.

Because of centuries of systemic racism and inequities, Black, Latino, and Indigenous people have always faced unacceptable barriers to the health care they need. Title X is part of the solution, as it disproportionately serves Black, Latino, and Indigenous patients, patients with low incomes, young people, and patients in rural areas.

In April, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a proposed rule to start rolling back the harmful changes made by the previous administration to the Title X Family Planning program, thereby creating an avenue for Planned Parenthood health centers to reenter the program. PPFA and PPAF mobilized partners, affiliates, and supporters to help generate more than 141,000 public comments to HHS over the 30-day comment period. PPFA also hosted [Rightfully Ours: Rescinding the Title X Gag Rule](#) partner briefing for partners to learn about the harmful impact of Title X gag rule, the new proposed regulations, and how to take action.

On October 7, 2021, the Department of Health and Human Services published its final rule to undo the Title X gag rule and other changes to Title X program requirements and regulations. The rule also includes updates to Title X family planning program regulations and definitions to meet a better and more wholesome understanding of health equity and inclusivity. Unfortunately, the new rule leaves an opening for Title X providers or grantees to refuse to counsel or refer patients to abortions. This harmful and unnecessary policy could deny a patient accurate and comprehensive health options due to their provider's personal beliefs. The final rule was effective November 8, 2021.

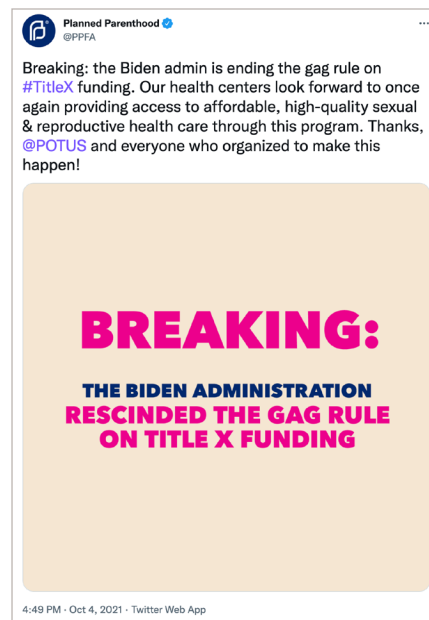
The amount of relentless work that has gone into weathering, and now undoing, the gag rule cannot be understated. Though the harms from the last two years can never truly be undone, this is an important step toward restoring access to sexual and reproductive health care for millions, and making the program work better for patients and the providers who serve them.

As of early 2022, the administration is considering or seeking proposals for three sets of Title X funding, including additional funds secured as part of Planned Parenthood's advocacy around the American Rescue Plan Act, that will be distributed in early 2022. Health care providers and states forced to exit the program under the previous administration should have an opportunity to reenter the program as direct grantees or subrecipients this year. However, the new rule is currently being challenged in court, potentially delaying the opportunity for prior recipients to reenter the program.

Lifting Restrictions on Medication Abortion

For the two decades since it was approved for use in the United States, restrictions on one of the drugs used in medication abortion - mifepristone - have made providers and patients jump through medically unnecessary hoops to access the drug. FDA rules require that providers be registered to administer the drug and require that the drug be provided in-clinic to patients, making mailing or picking the medication up at a pharmacy impossible. The Biden-Harris administration FDA lifted the in-person requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic and continued evaluating the requirement for permanent removal. Planned Parenthood joined a [coalition letter of 55 groups](#) calling on the administration to immediately remove the medically unnecessary restrictions on mifepristone. More than 200,000 supporters joined the urgent call by signing petitions to the administration.

On December 16th, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [announced](#) they would permanently remove the in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone. Although Planned Parenthood had advocated for the removal of the REMS requirements altogether, we were pleased that the agency relied on extensive data demonstrating the safety of removing the in-person dispensing requirement. At this time, the changes will not take effect until the FDA approves "prior approval supplements", which have to be submitted by the manufacturers within 120 days of the FDA announcement.



Abortion Restrictions in ACA Plans

The Biden administration also rescinded a rule that would have posed onerous and unnecessary restrictions on abortion in plans sold through the ACA individual marketplaces by imposing burdensome separate billing requirements for abortion coverage. This rule was vacated by courts in 2020, including in a case brought by Planned Parenthood of Maryland, and was never implemented. If the Trump rule had taken effect, it could have led to insurers dropping coverage for abortion entirely due to administrative burdens, and would have caused confusion for health plan enrollees that could have resulted in loss of coverage. Planned Parenthood was thrilled to see the Biden-Harris administration rescind this harmful rule that stigmatized abortion coverage and imposed onerous barriers on consumers and health plans.

Restoring Global Reproductive Rights Reporting in the Annual Country Reports on Human Rights

The State Department took important action this year to resume reporting on reproductive rights in the Country Reports on Human Rights released annually. This change was announced in March as part of the administration's commitment to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights. These annual reports serve as an important tool for human rights advocates to identify where countries can improve their human rights, including reproductive rights and access to sexual and reproductive health. Restoring this reporting on key issues such as maternal mortality, access to contraception, access to skilled health care during pregnancy and childbirth, access to emergency health care, legalization of abortion, and discrimination against women in accessing sexual and reproductive health care, including for survivors of gender-based violence, delivers on a key priority advocated by PPFA and partners.

VI. RESPONSE TO TEXAS S.B. 8

When the Supreme Court allowed Texas S.B. 8, which essentially banned abortion after six weeks in the state, to take effect in September, President Biden, Vice President Harris, and other members of the Biden administration [immediately responded](#) to the news. President Biden strongly condemned the decision in a [statement](#) directing the White House Gender Policy Council and Office of the White House Counsel to launch a 'whole-of-government' effort to respond to the decision, focusing primarily on the Department of Justice and Department of Health & Human Services. Vice President Harris also condemned [the law](#) and [the Supreme Court ruling](#).

Following President Biden's statement, the Gender Policy Council co-chairs and other White House senior staff [convened a meeting of reproductive health leaders](#), including Planned Parenthood President Alexis McGill Johnson, to discuss the impact of the ruling. Vice President Kamala Harris also met with abortion providers and patient advocates from Texas, Mississippi, Kentucky, and New Mexico at the White House to discuss how the Biden administration can restore and protect access to abortion. U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland [announced](#) that the Department of Justice (DOJ) would "protect those seeking to obtain or provide reproductive health services" through its authority under the [Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances \(FACE\) Act](#), which protects people seeking and providing reproductive health care services from interference and threats. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra [announced](#) a series of actions to support health care providers and patients in Texas, including grant support for clinics and resources that outline protections for health care personnel and pregnant individuals. In addition, HHS reemphasized requirements under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA), which requires emergency medical treatment, including people who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy loss.

While the administration's actions were welcome and needed, much more will be required in the coming year as access to abortion becomes even more difficult and every effort to ensure people can access care will be critical.

Subsequently, DOJ [filed suit](#) against the State of Texas for violating the constitutional rights of people needing abortions in Texas and interfering with federal government functions by purporting to prohibit federal agencies from carrying out their responsibilities under federal law related to abortion services. That lawsuit resulted in an injunction that allowed the restoration of abortion services for a short period of time in October before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit stayed the injunction. Last month, the Supreme Court once again allowed the law to stand, denying Texans their right to abortion, and further emphasizing the need for the Biden-Harris administration to take all actions within their power to protect people's access to abortion.

VII. COMMITMENT TO HEALTH EQUITY

The Biden-Harris administration has focused on health equity, perhaps more than any other administration, largely in response to the health disparities that have been exacerbated and made more visible by the pandemic and the simultaneous pressure to address racism and white supremacy.

Pandemic Response

An equitable COVID-19 response has been a critical component of the administration's focus from Day 1:

- As one of his initial actions, President Biden issued an [Executive Order on Ensuring an Equitable Response to the Pandemic](#)
- Among requiring focus on equity across federal agencies, established [COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force](#) to
 - Convene national experts on health equity, including those with lived experience;
 - Provide recommendations to mitigate COVID-19 health inequities;
 - Increase data collection and reporting for high risk groups;
 - Expedite and streamline data collection;
 - Identify high-risk communities, track resource distribution and evaluate effectiveness
 - Increase reporting of federal data;
 - Expand data collection for commercially insured populations; and
 - Reaffirm privacy post-collection of health data.
- The administration also partnered with community groups, like Planned Parenthood health centers, to engage with communities and reach people who are underserved and have a completely understandable and reasonable distrust of the health care system given a history of abuse, in particular in Black, Indigenous and other communities of color.
- The administration has supported and continues to facilitate state and health provider efforts to expand the use of telehealth services during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) and beyond. In December, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services unequivocally stated that the telehealth flexibilities that allow states to cover and pay for Medicaid services delivered via audio-only communications will continue to be available after the end of the PHE.
- Globally, the administration made an important commitment to provide 1 billion vaccine doses to other countries and join with the global community to reach the target of vaccinating 70% of the world's population. Unfortunately, the pandemic has only increased inequities between high income countries and low and middle income countries, and more significant commitments are needed to support vaccine production, distribution, and delivery to truly end this global pandemic.

Maternal Health Crisis

- The Biden-Harris administration has been wholly committed to addressing the maternal health crisis and has pursued both administrative and Congressional avenues to promote healthier pregnancies and reduce disparities.
- To date, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved 1115 demonstration projects in [Illinois](#), [Georgia](#), [Missouri](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Virginia](#) to expand pregnancy benefits for postpartum individuals past 60 days required by current Medicaid law. Building on this, the administration worked with Congress to include in the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) a new Medicaid state plan amendment (SPA) option for states to expand postpartum coverage to 12 months. Both Virginia and New Jersey will be transitioning to the SPA option once it goes into effect in April 2022. To encourage more states to select this SPA, on December 7th, CMS released [new guidance](#) for state health departments.
- On November 30, President Biden signed into law S. 796, the Protecting Moms Who Served Act, which will improve maternity care coordination and maternal mortality data collection within the Department of Veterans Affairs. This bill is the first bill within the twelve bill Black Maternal Health Omnibus to be signed into law.

- December 7th, the Vice President also declared a Call to Action to Reduce Maternal Mortality and Morbidity, releasing a [fact sheet](#) and commemorating the event with a virtual table where administration officials, members of Congress, and other advocates highlighted policy successes and additional opportunities, and current efforts to advance maternal health equity. Other announcements included designating hospitals with positive maternity care outcomes as “[birthing-friendly hospitals](#)” and a report by the HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation on the effects of expanding Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum.
- Lastly, the administration is working with Congress to pass the [Build Back Better Act](#) (BBBA) which makes historic maternal health investments in workforce development, addressing cultural competency in the clinical setting, and permanently changes Medicaid law to require coverage from pregnancy to 12 months postpartum. Many of the other policy proposals from the Black Maternal Health Momnibus are included within the historic investments of BBBA.

Global Commitments on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The Biden administration took critical steps in their first year to promote and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in international forums, including the United Nations (UN). In July, Vice President Harris was a featured speaker and served as the lead representative of the U.S. delegation to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris, a global gathering intended to be a major inflection point to accelerate action to achieve global gender equality by 2030.

She announced commitments on behalf of the U.S. government across several priority domestic and foreign policy areas, including protecting and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, preventing and responding to all forms of gender-based violence, and strengthening women’s economic security.

This aligned with additional actions the U.S. took in UN negotiations addressing gender equality, HIV, and reproductive rights throughout the first year, including supporting progressive positions on sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive sex education, access to health care for key populations, and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

VIII. PERSONNEL



Xavier Becerra,
Secretary of Health and
Human Services



Rachel Levine,
Assistant Secretary
for Health



Chiquita Brooks-LaSure,
Administrator for the
Centers for Medicare and
Medicaid Service



Jessica Marcella,
Deputy Assistant
Secretary, Office of
Population Affairs



Deb Haaland,
Secretary of the
Interior



Linda Thomas-Greenfield,
United States ambassador
to the United Nations

One of the areas where the Biden administration has made historic progress is in selecting a diverse and pro-sexual and reproductive health Cabinet and other key officials throughout the administration.

Biden named the first ever Latino to lead the Department of Health and Human Services: [Xavier Becerra](#), a California public official with a strong reproductive health record. He selected [Rachel Levine](#) to a senior role in HHS, and she became the first transgender person confirmed by the Senate. He selected the first Black woman, [Chiquita Brooks-LaSure](#), to lead the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services. He nominated a Black woman from the reproductive health community, [Jessica Marcella](#), to head the Office of Population Affairs.

The administration also made historic appointments in other parts of the administration, including [Deb Haaland](#), the first Native American to head Interior Department, and [Linda Thomas-Greenfield](#), a champion of sexual and reproductive health and rights leading the U.S. on the global stage as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

And beyond the high profile names, we know that due in part to our efforts in funneling a robust pool of highly qualified and diverse individuals, there are SRHR and health equity champions throughout the administration, including many former Planned Parenthood staff. As the saying goes, “Personnel is policy.” Having personnel at all levels of the administration with reproductive health expertise and experience is critical to achieving health equity and improving access to reproductive health. This Administration has not only prioritized personnel with a diverse array of perspectives, backgrounds, and lived experiences, it has prioritized science based expertise and policymaking.

There are still critical positions that remain unfilled and we look forward to working with the Biden-Harris administration to continue to fill these roles with diverse candidates and sexual and reproductive health and rights champions.

IX. JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Another area where the Biden administration has made historic progress is in swiftly selecting diverse Article III judges to sit in lifetime appointments on our federal courts. Recognizing the critical role the courts make in protecting all our rights – including reproductive health and rights – the administration has worked with the Senate to prioritize judicial appointments and confirmations this last year. President Biden has [appointed](#) the “highest number of federal judges in the first year of a presidency in four decades, rapidly filling vacancies at a clip that outpaces his predecessor with judicial picks from a diverse range of racial, gender and professional backgrounds.”

As of December 2021, [65% of Biden appointees have been people of color, and 80% have been women](#). Sixty-three percent of appointees are professionally diverse (i.e. do not possess corporate or prosecutorial backgrounds), constituting public defenders, plaintiff’s lawyers, civil rights lawyers, legal services lawyers, consumer protection lawyers, or labor lawyers.

X. VOTING AND DEMOCRACY REFORM

The Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting was a critical step towards promoting and defending the right to vote. The EO included important provisions such as increasing opportunities for employees to vote, expanding access to voter registration, and improving vote.gov.

President Biden and Vice President Harris have also been vocal in their commitment to improving voting rights, and democracy reform as a whole, including by issuing Statements of Administrative Policy for: The DC Admission Act (H.R. 51), The For The People Act ([H.R. 1](#) and [S.2093](#)), The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act ([H.R. 4](#) and [S.4](#)), The Freedom to Vote Act ([S. 2747](#)).

XI. WHAT COMES NEXT: LOOKING TOWARD YEAR 2

As we look toward the second year of the Biden-Harris administration, PPFA and PPAF will continue to push the administration to advance health equity and access to sexual and reproductive health care domestically and around the globe.

1.	Taking all available steps to protect the right to abortion and ensure that people across the nation and the world can access timely and affordable care.
2.	Protecting the right of people, including people who use Medicaid, to seek care from the provider of their choice, including abortion providers;
3.	Pushing Congress to pass the Women’s Health Protection Act end the Hyde Amendment and related restrictions;
4.	Emphasizing sexual and reproductive health funding in the President’s FY23 budget proposal;
5.	Enforcing the women’s health preventive services benefit under the Affordable Care Act to ensure that everyone has affordable access to the birth control method of their choice;
6.	Permanently ending the global gag rule;
7.	Championing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) globally by promoting SRHR across UN and multilateral forums, including the annual Commission on the Status of Women and Commission on Population and Development.
8.	Using the authority of the federal government to ensure that all people within the custody and control of the federal government have comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion;
9.	Robustly implementing the White House Gender Policy Strategy across federal agencies.
10.	Eliminating religious exemptions that allow providers and federal grantees to discriminate against women and LGBTQI+ people;
11.	Working to mitigate the harm of and support the elimination of the Helms Amendment;
12.	Prioritizing and integrating SRHR across U.S. foreign policy;
13.	Expanding access to contraception in U.S. global health programs, including the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest U.S. health program around the world.
14.	Working with Congress to ensure the Title X program is fully funded, modernized, and able to meet people’s needs during this pandemic and beyond;
15.	Working with Congress to pass critical democracy reform legislation including but not limited to: The Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act and The DC Admissions Act;
16.	Working with Congress to pass court reform measures including but not limited to: expanding our lower courts, ethics reform across our judiciary, and considering robust reforms to the Supreme Court of the United States to bring balance and fairness back to our third branch of government.