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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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<http://help.senate.gov>

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Dear Colleagues:

In the first few months of the Trump Administration, we have seen an unprecedented assault on women's access to basic health care services and on women's reproductive rights. President Trump and Congressional Republicans are clearly committed to adopting extreme policies that will roll back decades of progress on these issues, both in the United States and abroad. As we continue our efforts to defend women's health and rights, I am writing to alert you to the strikingly extreme, anti-choice agenda that two recent appointees have pursued throughout their careers.

Many of you joined me in sending a letter to President Trump after his first 100 days in office, which detailed his efforts to undermine women's health and rights and called on him to reverse course. We have seen the Trump Administration double down on this dangerous path in the past few weeks.

- Earlier this month, the Administration released guidance on implementation of the expanded global gag rule, which now bans global health funding from the U.S. government for organizations that also provide counseling, referrals, or services for safe and legal abortion – even with their own funding. The recently released guidance makes clear that this Administration is expanding the already dangerous policy from one that affected \$600 million under the Bush Administration to one that now hamstring \$8.8 billion under the Trump Administration.
- We also saw in President Trump's budget released last week innumerable proposals that attack women, including a proposal that would strip federal funds from Planned Parenthood, including funding for Medicaid coverage, Title X family planning grants, and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grants.
- Last week, the Administration announced that it is reviewing an interim final rule that could roll back the requirement under the Affordable Care Act that insurance plans provide no-cost coverage of women's preventive services.

President Trump's appointments are a clear signal that we can unfortunately expect these efforts to continue--and a reminder of the need to stay vigilant in our oversight. My staff has prepared the attached memo on two recent HHS appointees: Charmaine Yoest as the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Teresa Manning as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs. Neither position requires Senate confirmation. Both individuals are vehemently anti-choice, and their appointments heighten my serious concerns about the efforts taken thus far by the Trump Administration on women's health.

The memo outlines why Ms. Yoest and Ms. Manning's efforts to spread misinformation, undermine women's access to basic health care services, and roll back women's reproductive rights are especially dangerous given the offices they will lead. As Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Ms. Yoest will be heavily involved in crafting HHS's public messages and may act as Secretary Price's proxy on communications decisions. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs, Ms. Manning will be in charge of administering the Title X program, a federal grant program dedicated to providing comprehensive family planning and related preventive services. Manning's leadership of this program raises grave concerns about future access to preventive services (including birth control), treatment, and information critical to women's health care decisions.

I hope this memo is useful to you. I encourage you and your staffs to remain focused on appointments similar to these in agencies across the Administration. Together we can remain committed to working to hold President Trump accountable and ensure women and their families are not pawns in his Administration's ideological and partisan attacks.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator
Ranking Member Senate Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions Committee