

November 30, 2020

The Honorable Joe Biden
President-elect of the United States
[Transition Office]

Dear President-Elect Biden,

As organizations committed to reproductive, gender, economic, immigrant, and racial justice, we know that this is a crucial moment for Black and Brown communities, women, LGBTQ folks, immigrants, and young people. Our communities are still trying to survive the COVID-19 pandemic and people continue to fight for racial justice all over the country. We are fighting for a future in which we can control our own bodies, safely care for our families, and work with dignity, no matter who we are or where we live. We are reimagining a world in which each of us makes a living wage, has the right to unionize, families live free from violence, and everyone has access to the full-spectrum of reproductive, maternal, and sexual health care, including abortion.

The Biden-Harris transition priorities¹ reaffirm a commitment to ending systemic racism and economic inequality, getting control of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and ensuring access to reproductive healthcare including abortion for people in the U.S. and around the world.² The millions of women³, Black⁴, Indigenous⁵, and people of color, and low-income people who turned out in record numbers voted to prioritize these issues. To collaborate on implementing these priorities, we look forward to working together to create a Biden Cabinet comprised of leaders with pro-worker, pro-immigrant, and pro-abortion access records.⁶

This is a moment to elevate the leadership of the diverse coalition that voted to build back better: women; Black, Indigenous, and people of color; LGBTQ people; low-wage workers; and immigrants. The undersigned organizations urge you to build from the diverse agency review teams⁷ to assemble the most diverse Cabinet in history.⁸ We also urge you to consider any appointees' record on reproductive and sexual health and rights, including abortion; immigrant rights; and workers' rights before naming them to the Cabinet.

Executive nominees and appointments are a crucial component of building back better and realizing a more just and equitable world, as they are responsible for implementing policies and regulations which impact our communities in the U.S. and communities around the world. As noted in Principle 5 of the Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice, the President's appointment power has a significant impact on sexual and reproductive rights, health and justice. Executive agencies play a key role in interpreting and defining legal

¹ [Priorities | President-Elect Joe Biden](#)

² 2020 Democratic Party Platform <https://bit.ly/3jp9YI9>

³ [Supermajority hosts Women Are Voting nationwide event](#)

⁴ ['My people fought for the right to vote': With a surge of emotion, Black Americans rush to the polls](#)

⁵ [How Indigenous voters swung the 2020 election — High Country News — Know the West](#)

⁶ ['Democrats take them for granted': Black women call out party leaders on post-election strategy](#)

⁷ [People of color make up nearly half of Biden transition team](#)

⁸ [Joe Biden could have the most diverse Cabinet in U.S. history](#)

protections and civil rights across domestic and foreign policy⁹.

During the four years of the Trump administration, federal agencies were used to cause much harm to our communities. As one of the current administration's first acts, the global gag rule was radically expanded, disrupting access to health care for millions of people around the world who are reached by U.S. global health programs.¹⁰ The Secretary of Labor opposed raising wages for low-wage workers¹¹, refused to issue emergency guidelines to protect essential workers during the pandemic,¹² and tried to stop low-wage workers from holding large corporations accountable for abuse on the job¹³. The Trump administration's Health & Human Services (HHS) added yet another insurance barrier to abortion care¹⁴. The Office of Refugee Resettlement, within HHS, denied immigrant women in detention centers access to abortion care¹⁵ and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) staff inflicted reproductive violence on more than 50 women¹⁶. Under the current administration, family separation became a policy, taking thousands of children from their parents¹⁷. Finally, over the past four years, this administration decimated the Title X family planning provider network¹⁸. These harmful policies strip people of bodily autonomy and the ability to choose if and when to parent.

To undo the damage from the past four years and build back better, we need to restore expertise and leadership into federal agencies. We are encouraged that you've already begun to appoint executive nominees and appointees who are experts in the field of the agency, office, or program they will lead, and who possess a demonstrated track record of leadership in that field. Crucial positions include but are not limited to the Secretary for Health & Human Services, Administrator of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Labor Secretary, Secretary of State, Attorney General, USAID Administrator, Chair of White House Council for Gender Equity, and the Food And Drug Administration Commissioner. All cabinet agencies should appoint a high-ranking, full-time official tasked with advancing gender equity at the intersections of racial, economic, immigrant, and reproductive justice, who would be responsible for participating in the White House Council for Gender Equity and implementing gender equity efforts at the agency level.

The nominees and appointees must have a strong commitment to protecting and expanding reproductive healthcare¹⁹, including abortion; racial justice; ensuring economic security for

⁹Blueprint for Sexual & Reproductive Health, Rights, & Justice. Principle 5: Ensure Judges and Executive Officials Advance Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Wellbeing, pg. 12.

<http://reproblueprint.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/BlueprintPolicyAgenda-v14-PR-All-1.pdf>

¹⁰ [The Unprecedented Expansion of the Global Gag Rule: Trampling Rights, Health and Free Speech](#). Guttmacher (April 2020).

¹¹ [Column: Trump's Labor secretary comes out against giving workers a raise](#)

¹² [Court rejects AFL-CIO lawsuit to force OSHA to issue an emergency temporary standard](#)

¹³ [Labor Department Appealing Decision Nixing Joint-Employer Test](#)

¹⁴ [HHS unveils new requirement for abortion coverage payments under Obamacare](#)

¹⁵ [The Trump Officials Making Abortion an Issue at the U.S.'s Refugee Office](#)

¹⁶ [Migrant Women Detail Medical Abuse, Forced Hysterectomies](#)

¹⁷ [The Facts About Donald Trump's Family Separation Policy | Time](#)

¹⁸ [Trump Administration's Domestic Gag Rule Has Slashed the Title X Network's Capacity by Half](#). Guttmacher (Feb. 2020).

¹⁹ Blueprint for Sexual & Reproductive Health, Rights, & Justice. Cabinet and sub-Cabinet appointments, pg. 107.
<http://reproblueprint.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/BlueprintPolicyAgenda-v14-PR-All-1.pdf>

low-wage workers; and ensuring a right to bodily autonomy and access to healthcare, no matter someone's immigration status. We look forward to working with you and members of your Cabinet to build a better future for our communities.

Sincerely,

All* Above All
Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers In Action
Black Women's Health Imperative
Catholics for Choice
Center for Reproductive Rights
CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity)
Demand Justice
EMILY's List
Gender Justice
Global Justice Center
Guttmacher Institute
Ibis Reproductive Health
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice (IVRJ)
Ipas
Jane's Due Process
Japanese American Citizens League
Jobs With Justice
NARAL Pro-Choice America
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women's Law Center
Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health
One Fair Wage Action
Population Action International
People For the American Way
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Progress Florida

Provide Inc.
SisterReach
Supermajority Education Fund
The Women's Centers
UltraViolet
United We Dream
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
We Testify
Whole Woman's Health
Whole Woman's Health Alliance
Women's March