On July 11th, 2018, concerned citizens and global advocates will celebrate World Population Day. This annual event was designed to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues. This year, the theme for World Population Day will be "Family Planning is a Human Right."

The choice of this year’s theme is excellent because 2018 marks both the 20th anniversary of Population Media Center (an organization that has promoted family planning since our inception) -- and the 50th anniversary of the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights. The outcome document of this historical gathering affirmed that "Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."

In other words, the conference affirmed family planning as a human right.

Unfortunately, this important anniversary and supposed day of celebration are taking place in the context of failed leadership by the United States - leadership that is purposefully subverting the human right to family planning, both at home and abroad. Indeed, the Trump administration continues to show pure antipathy towards sexual and reproductive health and rights all around the world.
When it comes to birth control, family planning, and contraception it would be hard to imagine a worse administration than this one. First, Trump reinstated the deadly Global Gag Rule, an ideologically driven executive order that halted U.S. assistance for overseas family planning programs that use non-U.S. government funding to provide abortion services, information, or counseling. The real world result of this decision is that family planning programs and the communities they serve around the world have been financially devastated - more than a few have been forced to stop providing all services.

To add insult to injury, Trump then terminated all funding for the United Nation’s Population Fund, a major supplier of contraceptive services to women in the developing world.

Not merely content to harm human health and well-being overseas, however, the Trump administration is also doing all it can to reduce or eliminate support for contraception in the United States. For example, in 2017, the Trump administration issued a ruling letting health insurers and private employers refuse to provide birth control insurance coverage to their employees if doing so went against their religious beliefs or moral convictions.

More recently, Trump decided to use the health and well-being of around 4 million low-income reproductive health patients as political pawns. Trump has proposed barring Title X family planning funds from programs and facilities that perform abortions. To be clear, Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning services. Also, to be clear, there is a law in place called the Hyde Amendment which prohibits federal funds to be used to pay for abortion. Hence, it is the world’s worst kept secret that the real reason Trump has adopted this tactic is to financially knee-cap Planned Parenthood facilities. And - wait for it - the main reasons people visit a Planned Parenthood are contraceptive access (31%) and STI/STD testing and treatment (45%). Trump clearly thirsts for the hijacking of public policy by anti-choice ideology - in order to harvest accolades from his political base if successful.

Sorry folks, but this is RIDICULOUS!

With this failed leadership in mind and our sights firmly set on a better future, Population Media Center, a nonprofit charity with a mission to address the interconnected issues of the full rights of women and girls, population, and the environment, is organizing the #RidiculousRight? campaign. This awareness campaign will be centered around World Population Day, on July 11th.

Please sign-up to actively participate on July 11th. You can:
1. Help engage people across the United States, and the whole world, by sharing content.
2. Officially weigh-in on the proposed Title X rule changes.

We'll provide you with a social media kit, including memes (some humorous, some serious); example Tweets and Facebook posts; and top quality educational resources on these important issues.

The MAHB Blog is a venture of the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. Questions should be directed to joan@mahbonline.org

MAHB Blog: https://mahb.stanford.edu/blog/family-planning-right/