



2019 Debating for Democracy (D4D)TM Legislative Hearing

3:15 to 5:15 PM

March 28, 2019

**The Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts at The New School
New York, New York**

Project Pericles appreciates the generous support of The Eugene M. Lang Foundation
and thanks the New School for hosting this conference.

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Introduction and Overview

Project Pericles® is a not-for-profit organization that encourages and facilitates commitments by colleges and universities to include social responsibility and participatory citizenship as essential elements of their educational programs. Founded in 2001 by philanthropist Eugene M. Lang, Project Pericles works directly with its member institutions, called Pericleans, as they individually and collaboratively develop model civic engagement programs in their classrooms, on their campuses, and in their communities.

Debating for Democracy (D4D)™ is a distinctive campus-based co-curricular program that represents the mission of Project Pericles in action. On each campus, students research, develop, advocate, and defend their positions and opinions on current public policy issues.

Legislative hearings provide a forum where citizens can testify before lawmakers on important public policy issues. The etiquette and protocols involved in testifying before a committee of lawmakers is challenging, however providing informative testimony is a critical step in the legislative process.

This past winter, students at Periclean colleges and universities were encouraged to write a letter to a federal or state elected official on a public policy issue that impacts their community. In February, student teams mailed their letters to their elected officials and also submitted copies to Project Pericles. A panel of judges with substantial legislative experience selected the five finalist letters.

At today's legislative hearing, each of the five teams will have 20 minutes to discuss their letter and take questions from three former government officials who comprise the legislative committee: former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Constance Berry Newman; former U.S. Under Secretary of Education, Martha Kanter; and former Manhattan Borough President, Ruth Messinger. The order of presentation was determined by a random drawing. Each team will have up to five minutes to read their introductory remarks, followed by a 15 minute question and answer session with the legislators. The winning team will be announced at the reception.

Project Pericles will award \$3,000 to the winning team to develop an advocacy and education campaign to move their issue forward. The four other teams will receive a \$500 award for the same purpose.

Project Pericles would like to thank all of the students who wrote a letter to their elected representative, and we look forward to hearing about their future advocacy efforts. It is clear that our Periclean students are well on their way to becoming engaged citizens and leaders of their communities, nations, and world.

Dedication – D4D National Conference

We dedicate this Debating for Democracy (D4D)TM National Conference to Eugene M. Lang, Project Pericles Founder and Chair Emeritus in honor of his 100th birthday this month. Gene was the inspiration for the D4D Program. His vision, leadership, passion, and support have enabled Project Pericles from its inception to grow and thrive. As he wrote in 1999, “The philosophy of liberal arts is the philosophy of a democratic society in which citizenship, social responsibility, and community are inseparable. An educated citizenry is the essential instrument for promoting responsible social action and community well-being.” Through our programs we dedicate ourselves to continuing to develop and enhance Gene’s creative and important ideas. We appreciate the generous and ongoing support of the Eugene M. Lang Foundation.

About Eugene M. Lang (1919-2017): Eugene M. Lang pursued a business career for over 60 years, creating diverse manufacturing enterprises and joint ventures in the United States and more than 40 countries, based mainly on new products and innovative technologies. Recognizing his creative initiatives, *Forbes Magazine* characterized him as “the quintessential entrepreneur” and *Nation’s Business* as a “father of invention.” He and his Eugene M. Lang Foundation have a long history of philanthropic ventures in education, most notably the nationwide “I Have a Dream” Program. He has received many distinctions and awards, including more than 40 honorary degrees and official citations for his participation in eight overseas U.S. Government economic and trade policy missions. President George H.W. Bush designated him a “Point of Light” and President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, this country’s highest civilian award. In September 2008, he was named “Citizen of the Year” by the National Conference on Citizenship. A 1938 graduate of Swarthmore College, he earned an M.S. degree from Columbia University and studied engineering at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Married for more than 62 years, he and his beloved Theresa had three children, eight grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. He claimed his biggest success was his marriage and the strong sense of family that grew within an encompassing environment of love, respect, interaction, achievement, shared values, and social responsibility.

Dedication – Legislative Hearing

We dedicate this Legislative Hearing to Senator Harris L. Wofford. He was a founding Board Member of Project Pericles and served as a member of the first five Legislative Judging Committees at the D4D National Conference. Throughout his life he was a leader in higher education, civil rights, and a major force in America's national and community service movements. We are proud to have known him.

About Harris L. Wofford (1926-2019): Harris Wofford served as U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania from 1991 to 1995. He was instrumental in the enactment of the National Service Act of 1993, under which AmeriCorps was established. When he lost re-election to Rick Santorum, he was nominated by President Bill Clinton to be CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. He campaigned actively for Barack Obama and worked with the new administration and Senator Ted Kennedy to enact the 2009 Serve America Act under which AmeriCorps was authorized to grow to 250,000. In World War II, he served in the Army Air Corps. In the 1950s, he was an active participant in the Civil Rights movement, an advisor to Martin Luther King Jr., and an attorney for the United States Commission on Civil Rights. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed him Special Assistant to the President for Civil Rights. He was instrumental in the formation of the Peace Corps and went with his family to Ethiopia to be the Peace Corps Special Representative to Africa and later the Peace Corps Associate Director. His book, *Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties*, covers these years. In 1966, he became the founding president of the State University of New York's new college at Old Westbury, and in 1970 was appointed President of Bryn Mawr College. He received his B.A. from the University of Chicago in 1948 and in 1954 law degrees from Howard University School of Law, where he was the first white man to graduate, and from Yale Law School. He was a member of the Project Pericles Board of Directors. He received the 2012 Presidential Citizens Medal, the nation's second highest civilian honor for a lifetime of humanitarian work. Harris is survived by his husband, Matthew Charlton, his three children, six grandchildren, a brother and a sister.

Order of Presentation

Swarthmore College

Whitman College

Ursinus College

Macalester College

Pitzer College

Biographies of Legislators

Constance Berry Newman is Special Counsel for African Affairs at the Carmen Group and a Fellow of the Atlantic Council. She has served seven different presidential appointments and has extensive experience managing public and private organizations. She has worked to build partnerships between African governments, non-governmental organizations, and multi-national corporations in an effort to support African ownership and participation in development initiatives. From 2004-2005, she served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. She acted as the President's G8 personal representative on Africa, played an advisory role to the Secretary of State, and guided the operation of the U.S. diplomatic establishment in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2001, she was sworn in as the Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development, and led efforts to administer economic and humanitarian assistance. She has also served as President and Executive Director of the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, Board Member of the International Republican Institute, Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Commissioner and Vice Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and Director of VISTA. She graduated from Bates College with a political science degree and earned her law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Martha Kanter leads the College Promise Campaign, a national nonpartisan initiative to increase college access, affordability, quality, and completion in American higher education, starting with America's community colleges. She specializes in policy efforts to identify and apply innovative, evidence-based education interventions, financing models, and behavioral incentives at the local, state, and national levels to raise America's high school and college graduation rates in two and four-year colleges and universities. Martha also serves as a Distinguished Senior Fellow at New York University's Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy. From 2009-2013, she served as the U.S. Under Secretary of Education, responsible for overseeing all federal postsecondary statutory, regulatory, and administrative policies and programs, including Federal Student Aid. Previously, she served for 16 years as President of De Anza College and then Chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District in Silicon Valley, California. She has a B.A. from Brandeis University, a M.Ed. from Harvard University, and a Doctor of Education from the University of San Francisco.

Ruth Messinger is the inaugural Global Ambassador of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), an international human rights and development organization, which she served as President and CEO from 1998 to 2016. Under her leadership, AJWS granted more than \$270 million to promote social justice in the developing world and fought for policy changes in Washington. As Global Ambassador, Ruth works to engage rabbis and interfaith leaders to speak out on behalf of oppressed and persecuted communities worldwide. In addition, Ruth is serving as a Fellow in Social Justice at the Jewish Theological Seminary and mentoring the CEOs of several smaller not-for-profit organizations. Ruth is the Social Justice Activist at Jewish Community Center (JCC) Manhattan. She recently served on the U.S. State Department's Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group and is a member of the World Bank's Moral Imperative working group on extreme poverty. Before coming to AJWS, Ruth had a 20-year career in public service in New York City as a city council member and Manhattan Borough President. She has ample experience in public speaking and says it all started in the debate club in her high school. She received a B.A. from Radcliffe College (magna cum laude) and a M.S.W. from the University of Oklahoma.

MACALESTER COLLEGE

A Letter Proposing Alternate Accountability Measures for Elder Care Abuse in the Older and Vulnerable Adults Rights and Protection Act of 2018 (S.F. 3088), which would Reward Assisted Living Facilities for Taking Proactive Steps to Prevent Elder Abuse

Date: November 19th, 2018
From: Kai Akimoto and Fiona Adams

Office of Senator Karin Housley
95 University Avenue W
Minnesota Senate Bldg, Room 3217
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Housley,

As our grandparents enter assisted living facilities due to Alzheimer's and other long-term health issues, we want to ensure your work championing elder care reform continues to make meaningful strides throughout the state. We were inspired by your creation of the first-ever Minnesota Senate committee on aging, and write to encourage you to reexamine the Older and Vulnerable Adults Rights and Protection Act of 2018 (S.F. 3088) that you championed when Governor Dayton was in office. We hope that you can create a new version of the bill that works more directly with industry professionals to include provisions that reward assisted living facilities for taking action to prevent elder abuse. We believe that because the current bill was largely the product of a work group of senior advocacy organizations¹, its effects could discourage assisted living organizations, which are already facing difficulties recruiting staff and maintaining sustainable revenue streams. In addition, given the influence of assisted living organizations in rural areas², this bill will not retain rural support unless it is made together with industry professionals. A reintroduction of S.F. 3088 in the new legislative session will enable the government to streamline abuse reporting and organizational accountability without as much pushback.

We agree with your strong stance on this issue and hopes to prevent elder abuse with numerous preventive and punitive measures, and we agree with the statement that "sometimes, there is a lack of urgency ... [the industry] seem[s] to forget that people's lives are at stake" made by your colleague, Sen. John Hoffman.³ However, we also agree with criticism that S.F. 3088 was "one-sided," excluding the industry at the expense of cooperation. Our proposals below outline a version of S.F. 3088 that is more inclusive of the needs of assisted living facilities while protecting patients.

The issue of elder mistreatment is garnering more attention as our population ages; the generation dubbed "Baby Boomers" has led to a projection that more than 62 million Americans will be age 65 or older in 2025, an increase of 78 percent from 2001⁴. In Minnesota alone, the senior population is

¹ Serres, Chris. "Industry Lobbyists Push Back on Minnesota Elder Care Reforms." Star Tribune. March 25, 2018.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ US Census Bureau. "Older People Projected to Outnumber Children." Census QuickFacts. October 10, 2018.

predicted to double over the next twenty years⁵. This aging population will require care and protection, meaning investment in accountable assisted living facilities is more critical than ever before.

In recent years, allegations of abuse at privately-owned residential care facilities for older adults have increased more than 50 percent, reaching 24,100 total complaints last year alone⁶. For this reason, we applaud the message of the bill. We support the assurance that patients and residents must be told--in plain language--that there are legal rights for their protection during their stay; when elders report psychological and verbal abuse at a combined rate of 37%,⁷ it is critical that patients understand they are protected under the law. We also agree that your work to improve reporting and investigation of complaints is vital. During our research, we contacted Minnesota assisted living facilities and nursing homes to see how they felt about S.F. 3088. By far, the strongest support we heard was for improved reporting. However, despite our support for the great strides S.F. 3088 and its house counterpart, H.F. 3468, have made on the issue of elder abuse, we feel it could do more to consider the needs of industry professionals.

The current version of S.F. 3088 penalizes elder abuse and neglect through a fining system. We disagree with the idea that elder abuse incidence rates will decrease through financial penalties. A study by the National Institute of Justice found that largest factors associated with abuse were low staffing levels and lack of training⁸, both of which can be resolved through financial support. However, industry providers worry that fines and financial regulations could force struggling nursing homes out of business, and may even have a negative effect on staff recruitment amidst a statewide shortage of caregivers⁹.

In addition, this bill's bipartisan goals depend on support from representatives all over Minnesota. Industry professionals currently have huge influence throughout the state, especially in rural areas¹⁰. The senior care industry's two largest trade groups — Care Providers of Minnesota and LeadingAge Minnesota — spent nearly \$1 million on lobbying in 2016 and 2017, the largest outlay by the groups on record¹¹. This gives them incredible influence on the legislature, and elder care legislation must take their interests into account.

This is why we support an overhaul of the fining system outlined in Sec. 25. section 144A.474, subdivision 8 and subdivision 9 of S.F. 3088. Instead of the use of fines for all violations, we suggest the implementation of a conditionally funded mandate for low-level violations, defined as levels 0-2 in Sec. 27. section 144A.474, subdivision 11. With this mandate, if a commissioner found upon investigation that an employee or facility was in violation of the law, they would be granted up to 90 days to address the violation. The department would then conduct a follow-up survey such as the one noted within Sec. 26 section 144A.474, subdivision 9. If the department finds the violation was resolved, the facility could submit a request to the state budgeting office to be reimbursed for expenses incurred to resolve the violation, with common sense limitations for costs incurred due to new hires. If unresolved, the facility would face a fine as originally drafted in the bill.

⁵ Schuller, Jennifer. "Housing for Minnesota's Aging Population." Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Research and Evaluation Unit. August 1, 2010.

⁶ "Governor Dayton Announces Bipartisan Plan to Protect the Health and Safety of Seniors and Vulnerable Adults in Minnesota." Minnesota Department of Human Services. March 13, 2018.

⁷ "NIJ Studies on Elder Abuse." National Institute of Justice.

⁸ "NIJ Studies on Elder Abuse." National Institute of Justice.

⁹ Serres, Chris. "Industry Lobbyists Push Back on Minnesota Elder Care Reforms." Star Tribune. March 25, 2018.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

We believe this would prevent the resolved violation from reoccurring by giving facilities the financial means to address concerns, without removing a punishment for more serious violations. Medicaid is a prime example of an open-ended matching program; for Medicaid, the portion of state spending the federal government will match is inversely related to the state's income¹². This same concept of open-ended matching cost-sharing could work similarly at the state level. This is confirmed by a study done by the Inspector General for the Department of Human Health Services, which found that state cost-sharing programs are considered effective despite limited funding. State and local officials in all eight states say money from recipients of adult day care and in-home services actually helps to expand programs, add staff, and serve more recipients--all ways to help prevent staff burnout and elder abuse. On the budget side, two-thirds of the government officials surveyed considered the cost-sharing programs in their States to be cost-effective¹³.

We write this proposal because we know how hard elder care staff members work to keep our grandparents safe and healthy, and we stress that they be valued as you consider our proposal. Our informal phone poll of nursing homes and assisted living facilities found that industry providers care deeply about this issue and want to have input in the legislative process. We are in full support of your work on S.F. 3088, and hope that you take our recommendation for a capacity building cost sharing initiative into consideration.

Sincerely,

Kai Akimoto and Fiona Adams, Macalester College

1600 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

¹² Klaff, Daniel and Adam Lawton. 2008. *Conditional Spending and Other Forms of Federal Cost Sharing*. Harvard Law School Federal Budget Policy Seminar.

¹³ Kusserow, Richard. 1990. "Cost-Sharing for Older Americans (OEI-02-90-01010; 10/90),"

PITZER COLLEGE

A Letter in Support of the Healthy California Act (S.B. 562) that would Establish a State Based Universal Health Care System

Date: November 18th, 2018

From: Ray Hill-Cristol, Christian Cabuñag

Representative Freddie Rodriguez
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0052

Dear Representative Rodriguez,

We write to you to urge you to support the passage of SB 562, known as the Healthy California Act, which would establish a state based universal health care system, providing comprehensive health care coverage to every Californian. We believe that healthcare is a right that is deserved regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, and citizenship and we hope that you will recognize this by supporting the passage of this bill. In illustrating the injustice of excluding undocumented individuals from accessing affordable healthcare, we want to share the stories of Mark and Ella, two undocumented Californians who could be re-enfranchised by the passage of SB 562.

Mark, a DACA recipient, has struggled with anxiety and depression since his early teens, in part due to struggles with his identity as a gay man. Last year, Mark lost his DACA status, and was detained by ICE for several months. Arguing that deportation would put him at great risk due to rampant homophobia in Mexico, Mark was forced to “prove” his sexuality in the court of law; the judge claiming testimonies of friends and family were not enough. This humiliating experience was exacerbated by the intense homophobia he experienced while detained. Mark was eventually released from detention, reentering society with heightened levels of depression and anxiety and still without access to any form of quality, affordable, medical care.

While Mark’s story is important and troubling, his struggles with mental health are neither isolated nor uncommon. A study from Rice University found that nearly a quarter of undocumented immigrants surveyed suffered from some sort of mental health disorder (predominantly anxiety and depression).¹⁴ Of the over 2.35 million undocumented immigrants in California, this means that up to 587,000 individuals are suffering from mental health disorders, and are likely without critical health services. Mark currently works with local grassroots organizations to empower himself and his community, but he is fighting an uphill battle, and cannot do it alone. With the passage of SB 562, California could take a powerful stance against anti-immigrant sentiments which contribute to unjust health disparities.

You can find narratives such as Mark’s everywhere. Our valued community members, friends, and co-workers are impacted by lack of access to safe, affordable healthcare every day. Ella, a DACA recipient

¹⁴ Amy Mccaig, *Immigrants Living in the Country Without Authorization At Risk for Depression* (Rice University News and Media, 2017)

currently organizing and working with young, immigrant students, spent her own youth without access to health insurance. Ella recounts crying tears of relief the first time she was able to pay only \$11 for contacts when she entered college and finally benefitted from student health insurance. Before this, Ella had gone without the contacts she needed for months at a time due to her family being unable to afford the out-of-pocket price. This had both mental and physical impacts, leading Ella to fall behind in school and to suffer from frequent headaches and migraines resulting from constantly straining to see. Stories like this are unacceptable; punishing our undocumented community members by limiting access to fundamental healthcare is inhumane. No member of our society should be without affordable access to what is necessary to participate fully and to survive; the injustice of this current reality can be remedied by instituting SB 562.

The Affordable Care Act increased health insurance access for those not covered by their employers, but this extended only to citizens and legal residents. Despite its goal being to increase opportunities for healthcare, the program excludes undocumented communities and unemployed citizens; SB 562 would rectify this injustice. California has an impressive legacy of exercising independence in its governance surrounding healthcare; in June of 2015, limited Medical provisions such as emergency services were expanded to undocumented teens, but this action is not enough.¹⁵ With the introduction and passage of the Healthy California Act, all Californians would have access to healthcare, thus mending the exclusions of the Affordable Care Act and continuing California's legacy of leadership in this arena.

Presently, roughly 2.9 million California residents are uninsured, meaning that an enormous percentage of our state is without the affordable care necessary to live a humane life.¹⁶ Half of those uninsured are undocumented¹⁷. The current system wherein undocumented individuals are prohibited from accessing insurance violates what we believe should be understood as a human right. You have a history of supporting inclusive healthcare (such as SB-974) and we ask that you continue this trend, advocating for SB-562 and asserting that all California residents deserve healthcare.¹⁸ We also ask that you serve as part of the Healthy California Board as part of your advocacy for the bill, in order to ensure that regulations are being carried out to serve target populations, such as undocumented populations.

SB 562 would allow California to subsidize its own form of accessible healthcare and would mandate healthcare for all, regardless of legal status. Financially, the state government and other institutions have analyzed SB 562, and agree that the bill will cost between \$300 and \$400 billion per year. Half of this is already spent by federal, state, and municipalities on health care, and the other half can be paid for by enacting a 15% payroll tax.¹⁹ A health care Trust Fund will also be established under the California Department of the Treasury to receive all money designated for health care. Money that is currently spent to fund public programs, employer contributions for health care benefits, will go directly into the Trust fund.²⁰ This tax revenue will subsidize healthcare programs, eliminating the need for individual health insurance premiums, copays and deductibles. In addition to these options, the senate plans to request waivers from the federal government to utilize the money that is already being spent on Medicaid and

¹⁵ Angela Hart and Jim Miller, *Will Jerry Brown expand Healthcare to Undocumented Immigrants?* (Sacramento, 2017)

¹⁶ Paul Fronstin. "California's Uninsured: As Coverage Grows, Millions Go Without." *California Health Care Foundation*, (Oakland, 2017)

¹⁷ *Key Facts about the Uninsured Population* (2017)

¹⁸ *SB-974 Medi-Cal: Immigration Status: Adults* (Sacramento, 2018)

¹⁹ Catherine Ho, *How a Single Payer Healthcare Plan Would Look Like in California* (San Francisco, 2017)

²⁰ *What Is the Healthy California Act (SB 562, Lara/Atkins)?* (Novato, 2017)

Medicare in implementing SB 562²¹. There are several possible avenues to finance SB 562, making healthcare affordable and accessible to all.

As an increasing partisan divide has emerged surrounding healthcare, our nation seems to have lost touch with what should be the centerpiece of this issue: providing life-giving care to all. Our current system leaves millions without access to healthcare, a reality that inhibits members of our communities from full-participation in education and in the workforce, as well as from full-access to dignity, to peace of mind, and to wellness. The right to life and to health should not be contingent upon race, class, religion, gender or citizenship; the ability to attain care must be afforded to all, thus we urge you to support SB 562.

Sincerely,
Ray Hill-Cristol, Pitzer College Class of 2021
Christian Cabuñag, Pitzer College Class of 2020

²¹ Lara and Atkins, *SB-562 The Healthy California Act* (Sacramento, 2017) version 4

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

A Letter in Support of Driving 100% of Public School Funding through Governor Tom Wolf's Fair Funding Formula (H.B. 1552)

Ella Vetter & Zoe Jannuzi
Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

January 30, 2019

Hon. Leanne Krueger Braneky
115B East Wing
PO Box 202161
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2161

Dear Representative Leanne Krueger Braneky:

We are two Swarthmore students writing to urge you, in collaboration with other Pennsylvania State Representatives, to work to increase the percentage of education money put through the Fair Funding Formula. You need to address the dire education funding disparities in the state of Pennsylvania. We thank you in advance for taking the time to give your full and undivided attention to such a pressing issue. Upon researching this inequality, we were struck by the implementation of House Bill 1552, otherwise known as the Fair Funding Formula.²² Despite this being a great initiative with positive intentions, we noticed many flaws that are still contributing to the unequal funding of public education in Pennsylvania. The purpose of this letter is to encourage you, in collaboration with other Pennsylvania State Representatives, to work together and increase the percentage of education money put through the Fair Funding Formula. This will ensure that the districts that need increased school funding receive the increases they need, while other districts, particularly those with declining enrollment, are not unnecessarily overfunded.²³ Furthermore, we encourage you to speak with the students and teachers of underrepresented school districts to see the real implications that unfair funding can have on the quality of education. Attending school board meetings in your district, and reading school budgets will hold truth to the dire need of education funding reform. In violating student's basic human right to quality education, we are guilty of holding them back from an infinite number of exciting possibilities and opportunities.

In 2012, schools in Chester were forced to close their doors because of insufficient funding.²⁴ Since then, Pennsylvania has implemented the Fair Funding Formula, but as Deborah Gordon Klehr, executive director of the Education Law Center said, "A formula is only as good as the dollars and cents that go through with it."²⁵ If 100% of the money for education doesn't go through the funding formula, many districts, including Chester, will continue to be vulnerable to closings, while other shrinking

²² H.R. 1552, Pennsylvania House of Representatives Cong., 1-9 (2016) (enacted).

²³ Wolfman-Arent, Avi. "PA Governor Calls For Drastic School Funding Shake-Up." *WSKG*, July 2, 2018. <https://wskg.org/news/pa-governor-calls-for-drastic-school-funding-shake-up/>.

²⁴ Kauffman, Rick. "Chester Upland Pleads for More Funding for Schools." *Daily Times*, July 21, 2016. https://www.delcotimes.com/news/chester-upland-pleads-for-more-funding-for-schools/article_d7a551e9-3faf-50cf-8353-4fd9651ad357.html.

²⁵ Earls, Maya. "New Education Report Slams Pennsylvania School Funding." *The Philadelphia Tribune*, May 10, 2017. http://www.phillytrib.com/news/new-education-report-slams-pennsylvania-school-funding/article_03a65f46-f424-5659-af0d-92a5d7c94270.html.

districts will continue to receive more money than they deserve. According to a report by Equity First, an education advocacy group in Pennsylvania, 14 districts are underfunded by \$3,000 per student in basic and special education funding while 8 districts are overfunded by \$5,000 per student.²⁶ When schools are underfunded, the impact goes beyond the numbers. Teachers pay out of pocket for school supplies, arts and music programs are cut, special education goes underfunded, students with special needs are not identified, and the burden of funding schools falls on the taxpayers, something many of these districts cannot afford.²⁷ On one end of the spectrum, we have South Side Area School District which is overfunded by \$7,666 per student, while our most underfunded school district is York City School District which is underfunded by \$6565 per student.²⁸ When we funnel all of the education budget money through the Fair Funding Formula, the schools with greater need will be given the funds they deserve, in particular schools with higher numbers of students in acute poverty will be given proportionally increased funding.

Upon arriving at Swarthmore College, Ella had the opportunity to teach SAT preparation and College Choice curriculums in the Chester Upland School District through a non-profit called Let's Get Ready. This program is for high school students in under-resourced areas who have aspirations of attending college. During her first session, she had difficulty teaching the basic math curriculum due to the fact that her class of juniors did not know, or understand how to complete basic multiplication and division. Students who have a desire to better themselves and go to college have been, and continue to be, left victim to the inadequate quality of education available in the Chester Upland School District. Unequal state funding is to blame. Not only do these students have teachers who struggle to teach classes with little to no resources, but they also lack strong support systems that could help the students who come from very under-resourced environments thrive. Ella, as a student from Coatesville, a primarily underprivileged school district, has seen the negative impact this underfunding can have on the possibilities of success in one's education. Coming to a college that required a large majority of coursework to be done on a computer, she has experienced first-hand the adaptations students from under-resourced districts must make when there is inequality in opportunity due to underfunding of education. These experiences show us that by distributing access to quality education unequally, not only are we setting our future leaders up for failure, but we are indiscriminately allowing some students to flourish based only on the area in which they live.

We ask that you, as a Pennsylvania State Representative, address the much-needed action of increasing the percentage of money that is put through the Fair Funding Formula each school year until it reaches 100% in order to provide equal funding to all school districts across the state.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read our letter. We would love to receive a reply regarding your stance on this situation and any thoughts you have on reforming our education funding system. We appreciate having a representative that is so dedicated to ensuring equal access to a fair education in the state of Pennsylvania. We hope to be able to collaborate on this issue in the near future.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Vetter and Zoe Jannuzi
Swarthmore College Class of 2022

²⁶ Equity First. "Equity First Releases 2018 List of Most Underfunded School Districts." Equity First. April 16, 2018. <http://supportequityfirst.org/384-2/>.

²⁷ White, Bill. "Pennsylvania Fair Funding Formula Not a Liberal Plot." *The Morning Call*, July 23, 2018. <https://www.mcall.com/opinion/white/blog/mc-opi-pennsylvania-liberal-plot-white-20180723-story.html>.

²⁸ Equity First. "Equity First Releases 2018 List of Most Underfunded School Districts." Equity First. April 16, 2018. <http://supportequityfirst.org/384-2/>.

URSINUS COLLEGE

A Letter in Support of the HER Act (H.R. 671) to Address the Impact of the Global Gag Rule on the Delivery of International Health Care

Date: February 3rd, 2019

From: Abigail Peabody (Pasadena, MD), Sophie Auerbach, and Samantha Hayslett

The Honorable Anthony Brown
Anne Arundel Office
2666 Riva Road
Suite 120
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Representative Brown,

We write to implore you, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, to co-sponsor the HER Act (H.R. 671). This bill was first brought up by Nita Lowey in 2017 to address the devastating impacts of the Global Gag Rule. The Global Gag Rule, formally known as the Mexico City Policy, is an executive order created by Ronald Reagan in 1984 that took away United States funding from world health organizations' family planning services if the doctors provided abortion to their patients, regardless of their respective country's laws on abortion [1]. The administrations since Reagan have made this policy extremely partisan -- every Republican president has reinstated it, while every Democratic president has repealed it [2]. However, Donald Trump has expanded the policy. The revised policy prohibits funding for any foreign NGO that provides abortions, counsels about abortion, or advocates for the liberalization of abortion laws (with any funds) for not only family planning services, but all services that a clinic provides. This change applies to all U.S. funding for global health (over \$8 billion), putting families in extreme danger as they are not able to access necessary care, including HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, child nutrition services, malaria and zika prevention, global health security, family planning services, and much more [3].

The impacts of the loss of these services is more devastating than we would think. Marie Stopes International estimates that between 2017 - 2020, the loss of these services around the world could result in 6.5 million unintended pregnancies, 2.2 million abortions (2.1 million of them unsafe), and 21,700 maternal deaths. An example of the impact of the Global Gag Rule can be shown through Family Health Options Kenya (FHOK). FHOK will lose almost 60% of its donor funding by refusing to sign the GGR. This would result in critical staff members getting laid off and the closing of clinics around Kenya, many of which provide life saving services in rural communities [4]. These results can be paralleled in countries like Mozambique, Botswana, and Swaziland [5]. Melvine Ouyo, a Reproductive Health Nurse and Clinical Director of FHOK Kibera Clinic projects that hard earned progress in maternal mortality and preventing unintended pregnancies will be reversed. One patient at the Kibera clinic shared her story with Population Connection Action Fund. Mercy is a 19 year old single mother of a two year old girl and lives in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya. She uses family planning services provided by FHOK's Kibera Clinic. She told

PopConn, “I use the implant. For five years. So by that time, my daughter will have grown a little bit... [In] five years, I will come again and I replace it. I don’t want to have many children, and [struggle] with education [and] feeding them. I want to be a responsible mother in future. [I seek family planning services so] that my daughter can have the best. Not like me. And when she grows up, I will introduce her to family planning.” [4] Under Trump’s Global Gag Rule, Mercy and millions like her will lose her access to family planning, as well as other services provided by the clinic. As a primary funder of these organizations, and as someone who has the power to help fix this immense global health crisis, do you believe this is morally acceptable?

To combat the detrimental impacts of the Global Gag Rule, we urge you to co-sponsor the HER Act. The HER Act stands for Health, Empowerment, and Rights, and would block any administration going forward from reinstating the Global Gag Rule [6]. By signing this bill into law, there would be a consistent flow of money and care to clinics and families that need it most. With the start of the new House session, the HER Act needs to be reintroduced. The first sponsor of the bill, Representative Lowey, intends to re-propose the bill sometime in February. In order for the bill to make its way to the floor, it needs to move through the Foreign Affairs committee and their subcommittees. We push you to co-sponsor this bill in attempt to make that process smoother.

We hope you will take the appropriate actions to stand by the families that need our help. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Abigail Peabody
1394 Hurlock Ln,
Pasadena MD, 21122

Sophie Auerbach
Ursinus College

Samantha Hayslett
Ursinus College

Footnotes

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WHITMAN COLLEGE

A Letter to Introduce New Legislation to Prohibit Insurance Companies and Employers from Discriminating Against Workers Who Seek Compensation after an Injury, Based on Immigration Status

Date: January 30th, 2019

From: Salma Anguiano & Ameliz Price-Dominguez 420 NE 7th St. Hermiston, OR 97838 Whitman College 280 Boyer Ave. Walla Walla, WA 99362

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Senator Wyden,

We write to urge you to introduce new legislation that prohibits insurance companies and employers from discriminating against workers seeking compensation after an injury, based on citizenship status. In 2018, Florida introduced Senate Bill 1568, which addresses this issue in the state of Florida. Unfortunately, the bill died in committee. Since workers compensation laws differ from state to state, workers in the US would benefit from a clear federal law that prohibits these discriminatory actions.

It is unlawful to hire undocumented immigrants in the United States, although many companies knowingly do so. According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are over seven million unauthorized workers employed in America (MPI). Travis Putnam Hill of the Texas Tribune asserts that this phenomenon occurs because, “Employers skirt culpability by accepting fake documents that they are not required to verify” (Hill). The conditions in which illegal immigrants work are very unsafe, and employers do not make an effort to protect their workers. Instead, employers benefit from cheap labor and workers suffer the consequences of these hazardous working conditions. According to a study conducted by University of Southern California, “... men ages 18-64 who are Latino Immigrants have the highest average workplace injury rate at 13.7 per 1,000 workers... other ethnicities have a rate of around 11 per 1,000 workers”(Gersema). Treacherous immigrant working conditions often lead to serious employee injuries, and rather than pay insurance fees through worker’s compensation, companies save money by having their employees deported. President Donald Trump’s executive order to remove all undocumented people who have, “engaged in fraud”, makes it much easier for employers to deport their injured workers without fairly compensating them for their medical expenses by falsely claiming that they had no prior knowledge of their hirees’ citizenship status. In an NPR and ProPublica review of the application of Trump’s executive order in Florida’s Insurance Fraud Unit, it was found that, “more than 99% of the workers arrested under the statute were Hispanic immigrants working with false papers” (Grabell). The disproportionate weaponization of Trump’s executive order proves the legislation to be highly discriminatory against injured workers, who are often left to suffer in silence out of fear of deportation. This ploy to refuse workers their right to compensation in cases of workplace injury must be addressed,

and legislation in support of fair medical coverage is the only way to ensure these discriminatory practices cease.

Many companies who regularly hire undocumented individuals use their citizenship status as a method of denying rights to the workers they employ. This occurs because it is easier to disprove an employee's citizenship status rather than challenging the validity of their injuries. Employers actively hire illegal workers to assert legal control over their employees' potential worker compensation claims by using their citizenship status as a tool to keep them from vying for fair compensation. Some such cases are highlighted in an article published by NPR stating that insurance companies such as SouthEast, "...sign up these companies [employers] knowing full well that 95% of the employees are immigrant workers... only after an accident occurred do they determine they're going to do an investigation and check that social security number" (Grabell). The actions taken by insurance companies shed a light on the pointed intentions of both employers and their affiliates from the very beginning, Before an actual accident even takes place, these companies create systems which subject their employees to unfair injury compensation processes. David Michaels, a former head of the federal Occupational Safety Health Administration, comments that, "It's infuriating to think that when workers are hurt in the United States, they're essentially discarded... If employers know that workers are too afraid to apply for worker's compensation, what's the incentive to work safely?" (Grabell) There exists no incentive for these companies to create a sustainable work environment for workers that employers view as disposable labor. It is paramount that the humanity of these workers be maintained, and that legislation be put in place to protect all workers' right to medical treatment for injuries that occur on the job.

(Salma's speaks on her father's work injury) After returning home from work, my father sat down at the dinner table, and we began having our daily conversation. I could clearly see how tired he was after working a fourteen-hour shift. He proceeded to tell me that he didn't enjoy his new job, mentioning how the working conditions were unfavorable, and the pay was too little. He stressed to me, "Salma, make sure you continue to do well in school." During my father's third day on the job, he was injured in a car accident. The vehicle he was in was driven by his supervisor. The supervisor was speeding and driving recklessly with a van full of employees. After running a stop sign, a vehicle coming from the right side struck the van, where my father was located. The driver lost complete control and the van began to roll over. His actions had made it clear that his workers were seen as nothing more; than just cheap labor. When my father became quadriplegic, I had to make significant adjustments. After the accident occurred, my mother and I became his caretakers, a sacrifice made by both my parents as we now lacked the income from both sources. Before my father could return home, I had to take care of many preparations which included finding a doctor, creating an accessible home, and finding therapists. Items that should have been addressed by the insurance company were placed on my family, when we were still trying to comprehend what had just happened. My family of course, was afraid of confronting workers compensation, because they knew my father was an illegal immigrant. Despite having multiple doctor's referrals for medications, supplies, rehabilitation, and caregiving, they repeatedly told us they would only provide what they thought was "necessary." Due to their knowledge of my father's citizenship status, workers compensation discredited father's needs by only supplying the bare minimum and at times, nothing at all. I became a caregiver for my father while my mother worked. I learned to use special equipment to transfer my father

into bed from his wheelchair. I also had to administer his medication and ensure that he was stable. My family was affected by this accident in many ways, but perhaps the hardest part was realizing that our lives could never be “normal” again. Although my father continues to receive workers compensation, there may be a day where something changes, and he is deported or further denied his rights.

Work injuries such as this can change a person’s life drastically. These workers go out every day and do their jobs, we should encourage companies to create safe working conditions, so that accidents are avoided. Every worker deserves the right to be protected, regardless of whether or not they are a U.S. citizen. As a Senator who has supported immigrants throughout your career, we hope that we can count on your support to push this new legislation and bring awareness to this issue. We thank you for your time and we hope to hear back from you soon.

Sincerely,

Salma Anguiano & Ameliz Price-Dominguez

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