



Nita M. Lowey
Congress of the United States
 18th District, New York

October 2, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
 Secretary of State
 2201 C Street, N.W.
 Department of State
 Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Madame Secretary,

I write to register my strong concern about the recent State Department decision to withhold U.S.-funded contraceptives from Marie Stopes International (MSI). It is my understanding that the State Department has found MSI non-compliant with Kemp-Kasten because it is a sub-grantee of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in China through which it seeks to expand access to voluntary family planning.

As you know, I disagree with the Department's decision to withhold funding from UNFPA, which the Administration's own 2001 commission found was not in violation of Kemp-Kasten, because I believe we should bolster programs that help prevent unintended pregnancy, abortion, and the spread of disease. Taking this policy even further by ordering six partner governments in Africa to stop providing U.S.-government donated contraceptives and supplies to MSI is an extreme policy that stretches the definition of "assistance" far beyond its intended meaning.

MSI receives no direct financial support from the U.S. government. Yet the State Department's decision could potentially deny thousands of women in Africa the family planning services they want and need and in no way will impact the Chinese policies related to family planning that are of concern to all of us.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and I pledge to continue my fight to ensure that our foreign aid programs focus on preventing unintended pregnancies and the spread of disease.

Sincerely,

Nita Lowey
 Chairwoman

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs