

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2004

The Honorable Colin Powell
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are members of Congress with longstanding records supporting the involvement of the United States in international family planning and reproductive health programs. We are very concerned about the adversarial positions that representatives of the U.S. government have taken during recent regional United Nations meetings assessing implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. This program of action was adopted by 179 nations at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

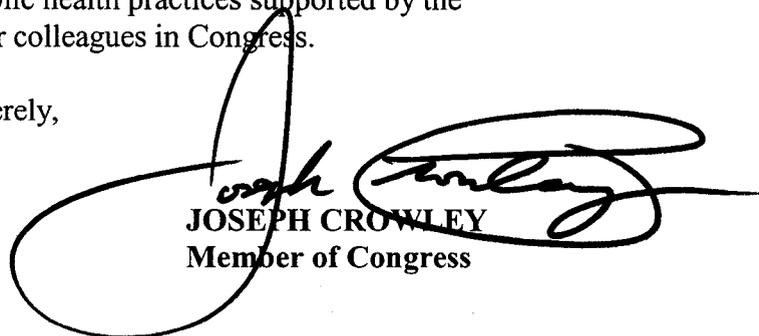
The United States has immense knowledge, expertise, and experience in the provision of family planning services. The United States is also the largest contributor of financial assistance among donor countries. Since 1994, the United States has provided leadership in the design and implementation of the broader agenda of new reproductive health interventions and women's empowerment initiatives, agreed to by the nations of the world at the ICPD. Regrettably, this leadership role is eroding due to persistent efforts by various U.S. representatives. Specifically, these representatives are undermining an international consensus that has evolved around the provision of reproductive health services.

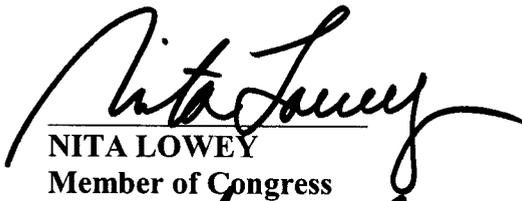
By steadfastly refusing to reaffirm the Cairo Programme of Action-combined with a preoccupation to redefine previously negotiated terms-the U.S. delegation, at various international meetings, has hindered efforts to achieve universal access to reproductive health services to all who need them by 2015. The delegation has also interfered with the ability of countries to even discuss other reproductive health issues of vital importance to their citizens and the future of their nations.

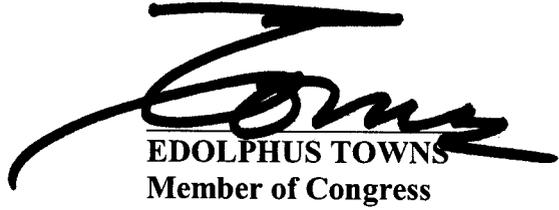
As advocates of strong, continued U.S. leadership in the field of family planning and reproductive health, we ask that you recognize the important role that the United States plays in the review and reappraisal of work that has gone on in the 10 years since the Cairo conference. We urge you to reorient and reinvigorate U.S. diplomacy, and advance policies and programs grounded in sound public health practices supported by the undersigned Members and the majority of our colleagues in Congress.

Sincerely,

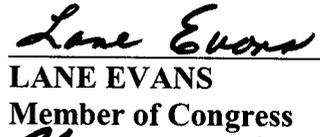

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

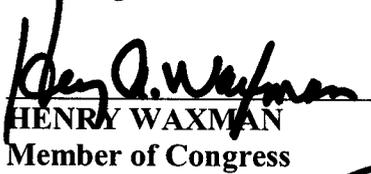

JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress


NITA LOWEY
Member of Congress

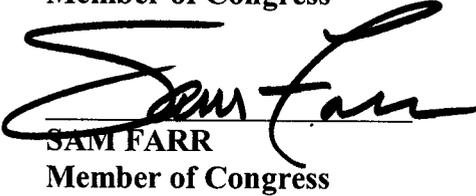

EDOLPHUS TOWNS
Member of Congress

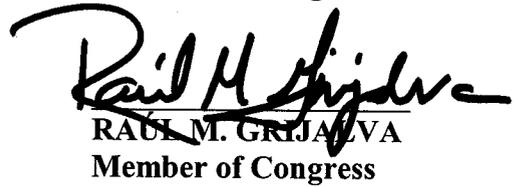

SHEILA JACKSON-LEE
Member of Congress

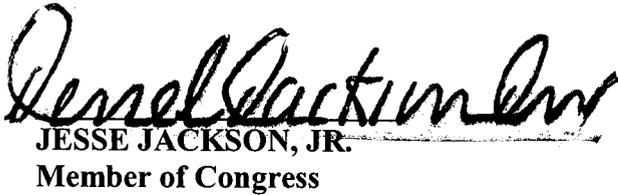

LANE EVANS
Member of Congress


HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress


CHARLES A. GONZALEZ
Member of Congress


SAM FARR
Member of Congress


RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress


JESSE JACKSON, JR.
Member of Congress


LOUISE SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress



