

CARE Action Advocacy Agenda: 119th Congress

For decades, CARE has complemented our programmatic work in more than 120 countries around the world with advocacy in the United States that multiplies our impact and supports those in greatest need, especially women and girls. Our commitment to advocacy promotes U.S. policy reforms that foster strong, resilient communities and respond to humanitarian needs.

CARE's decades of experience have proven that any lasting solutions must address the underlying causes of poverty: the lack of access to resources and opportunities. We know that women and girls, when given the proper resources and tools, have the power to help their entire family and community lift themselves out of poverty and recover more quickly from natural disasters and conflict.

The 119th U.S. Congress has an opportunity to play a critical role in meeting global development and humanitarian needs and in strengthening U.S. global leadership. As such, **CARE's advocacy efforts during the 119th Congress will focus on the Foreign Assistance Budget, Food and Nutrition Security, Global Health, Women's Empowerment, and Humanitarian Assistance and Response.**



Foreign Assistance Budget

The foreign assistance budget is the U.S. Government's primary funding

source for international programs for emergency response and long-term development. CARE is deeply concerned by proposals for deep cuts to lifesaving programs, particularly those that help the poorest in the world and threaten global stability. CARE urges Congress to:

- **Reject any cuts to U.S. foreign assistance in the federal budget.** Although foreign assistance represents roughly 1 percent of the overall U.S. budget, it is routinely targeted during budget cuts. The U.S. foreign assistance budget delivers one of the highest returns on investment of any government funding program, supporting initiatives that save lives and combat global poverty. Any cuts to the foreign assistance budget would signal a withdrawal of American leadership and risk upending communities that have benefited from decades of U.S. investment.



Humanitarian Assistance and Response

As global humanitarian needs

continue to rise, the U.S. cannot sacrifice its role as the most critical convener of global donors to unite and help the most at-risk populations. CARE urges Congress to:

- **Respond to new and existing humanitarian crises through robust funding and diplomatic engagement,** with particular attention on the unique needs of women and girls in emergency settings and the importance of empowering women and girls as a central role in responding to crises.
- **Protect funding for humanitarian assistance programs,** specifically how both short-term emergency response and long-term development can act together to more efficiently and effectively save lives today and in the future.



Food and Nutrition Security

As a partner in the fight against global hunger, CARE advocates for U.S.

Government support and funding for comprehensive food and nutrition security policies that feed more people while creating self-sufficiency. CARE urges Congress to:

- **Reauthorize a Farm Bill that strengthens and protects Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole Food for Education**, critical U.S. programs that are proven to reduce hunger and malnutrition, strengthen community self-sufficiency, and support women smallholder farmers. Congress must oppose efforts that would eliminate Food for Peace resilience programs and make emergency food aid programs nearly inoperable.
- **Maintain funding levels for international food assistance programs**, including but not limited to Food for Peace, McGovern-Dole Food for Education, and Feed the Future. This maintains decades of U.S. leadership in the fight against hunger by ensuring robust funding for comprehensive food and nutrition security programs that feed more people, especially women and girls.



Women's Empowerment

CARE advocates for the integration of women's and girls' empowerment and

equality throughout U.S. foreign assistance programs. As part of this effort, CARE supports efforts that incorporate strong policies and robust resources to prevent and address gender-based violence, promote women's economic empowerment and combat child marriage.

CARE urges for:

- **Congress to maintain funding levels for gender-based violence prevention and response activities and women's economic empowerment programming** to ensure continued progress towards supporting women and girls around the world. This includes maintaining funding for the existing women's economic

empowerment fund, which provides dedicated and direct resourcing to strengthen women's financial independence and security globally.

- **The U.S. government through Congressional and Executive action to prioritize women's economic empowerment** by strengthening and expanding savings groups programming, which increases women's financial security by facilitating their ability to save, borrow, and lend money within their communities.



Global Health

Strong, healthy societies start with equal access to affordable,

comprehensive health care – particularly for women and girls – and a well-supported, fairly paid health workforce. Diseases know no borders and without investments in global health, we risk our U.S. health and safety.

CARE urges Congress to:

- **Invest in those delivering critical health services and treatments** by increasing dedicated funding to the global health workforce and passing legislation to recruit, pay, train, and support community health workers. This workforce, the majority of whom are women, is routinely unpaid, underpaid, and under-supported, jeopardizing global health goals. Yet investing in community health workers could provide up to 10 times return for every \$1 invested.
- **Support robust U.S. funding for international family planning programming**, including funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the largest provider of reproductive health care globally. More than 800 women a day die from pregnancy-related complications, but these deaths are entirely preventable by ensuring women's access to family planning.