

July 12, 2019

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez,

The undersigned 38 organizations write to express our opposition to the nomination of Andrew Bremberg as U.S. Ambassador to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva.

The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva is a position of critical importance. The person occupying this role will be responsible for representing the U.S. in efforts to address some of the world's biggest challenges, including health, human rights, and humanitarian crises and the resulting refugee and migration trends. Mr. Bremberg's confirmation hearing, written responses, and previous record in government indicate he will not only obstruct, but actively work against the interests of individuals and communities worldwide who face the greatest barriers to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice.

We are deeply concerned about Mr. Bremberg's ability to promote the health and rights of all people. The role for which Mr. Bremberg is nominated will include representing U.S. interests with critical health organizations, including the World Health Organization and UNAIDS, charged with expanding access to health care. His involvement in the expansion of and unwavering support for the global gag rule, a policy which is demonstrated to disrupt the delivery of health care services in countries receiving U.S. global health assistance, indicates Mr. Bremberg will take positions that actively undermine investments in global health. In his role as Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, Mr. Bremberg played a central role in the administration's deregulation agenda, including guiding the failed attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, a law under which millions of people gained health insurance coverage. As the Policy Director of the GOP Platform Committee, he promoted several policies that would result in decreased access to health care services for people in the U.S., including defunding Planned Parenthood, overturning FDA approval for medication abortion, and promoting religious refusal policies that would allow health care providers to withhold information and services from the people they serve. This record demonstrates Mr. Bremberg would pursue an ideologically-driven agenda over the promotion of evidence-based policies and programs which would expand health care access.

Mr. Bremberg's record and confirmation hearing leave no doubt he will use the post of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva to strip away reproductive rights and LGBTQI rights around the world. During his confirmation hearing, he supported this administration's egregious and extraordinary threat to veto UN Security Council Resolution 2467 on gender-based violence in conflict over a reference to

survivors' access to sexual and reproductive health care. He even went a step further by stating unequivocally that he did not believe abortion should ever be permitted when pressed on the rights of rape survivors to have access to safe and legal abortion. This extreme position is at odds with the vast majority of Americans who support abortion access, and is inconsistent with authoritative interpretations of human rights law and even with current U.S. policy. He further stated the definition of human rights should exclude access to abortion. Mr. Bremberg's full-throated defense of Secretary Pompeo's newly announced Commission on Unalienable Rights indicates he will advocate against the widespread understanding that human rights are universal and indivisible. His promotion of "natural law and natural rights" that are "endowed by our Creator" signal his support for this administration's positions that some rights supercede others. The terminology used by Mr. Bremberg and this commission are commonly used by extremist groups opposed to reproductive rights, gender equity, and LGBTQI rights, and these comments provide reason to believe Mr. Bremberg would support these extreme positions and align himself with the groups pushing this anti-rights agenda worldwide.

Finally, the role for which Mr. Bremberg has been nominated will be critical to engaging in discussions regarding humanitarian crises, including the rights of refugees and migrants, with organizations like UNHCR. Yet he has supported detrimental actions to deny funding for organizations providing critical health care in humanitarian crises, like UNFPA, the primary provider of reproductive and maternal health care services and gender-based violence prevention efforts in humanitarian settings. During his time working under this administration, Mr. Bremberg has been complicit in the harsh and inhumane positions of this administration in relation to migration. He refused to comment on the zero-tolerance immigration policy, ignored the mental and emotional distress caused by the family separation policy, and engaged in efforts to terminate Temporary Protected Status for thousands of immigrants. UN bodies have widely criticized these positions, placing Mr. Bremberg in an already adversarial position with the organizations and global leaders with which he will work. He has also helped protect other bad actors in this administration who have violated the rights of people immigrating to the U.S.; earlier this year he hired Scott Lloyd, former Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, in order to protect him after he personally attempted to block young immigrant women from accessing safe and legal abortion. Mr. Bremberg has demonstrated he will put politics over the health and rights of those fleeing some of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies.

Human rights are universal. All people deserve to live healthy lives and have their human rights respected, protected, and fulfilled -- no matter who they are or where they live. A U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva should be someone who will advance access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, promote all human rights, oppose discrimination against LGBTQI people, and support the rights of immigrant and refugee communities. Andrew Bremberg's record and rhetoric clearly demonstrate he would not promote human rights, which is a fundamental requirement for this critical role.

We urge all Senators to oppose his confirmation.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
American Jewish World Service
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
CORE GROUP
Council for Global Equality
Feminist Majority Foundation
Global Justice Center
Global Rights for Women
Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation
Human Rights Watch
International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law
International Women's Health Coalition
Ipas
MADRE
Marie Stopes International
NA'AMAT USA
National Abortion Federation
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Association of Social Workers
National Council of Jewish Women
National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)
National Organization for Women
National Women's Health Network
North American MenEngage Network
Not Without Black Women
PAI
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection Action Fund
Population Institute
Positive Women's Network-USA
Secular Coalition for America
The Women's Collective
UltraViolet
V-Day and One Billion Rising
Women Graduates USA
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)
YWCA USA