Thank you for downloading the 2018 CARE Action U.S. Elections Toolkit!
It's a different kind of CARE package.
If you are new to our effort, welcome to CARE Action! You are now an important member of a group dedicated to change – changing U.S. foreign policy and changing lives for the better around the globe.

Every day, CARE works with people in the poorest communities to fight poverty and deliver lasting change. Our Washington, D.C. office is guided by insight from the 94 countries where CARE works as we advocate for U.S. policies that can improve global development and humanitarian response. CARE is known for our unshakable commitment to comprehensive maternal health care; our work to ensure access to healthy food; tirelessly fighting for girls, including the right to an education and an end to child marriage; advocating for timely and adequate responses to humanitarian emergencies with special attention to the needs of women and children and the prevention of gender-based violence; and preserving and improving foreign assistance.

How are the midterm elections relevant to fighting poverty globally?

We consistently hear from U.S. policymakers that too few Americans voice their support for legislative action on poverty-fighting issues. As a result, far too few elected officials make them a priority. We all have a responsibility to speak up and elevate these issues to the level of attention they demand.

America’s goodwill, innovation and investment can address some of the world’s greatest challenges. CARE’s goal of providing the tools for marginalized people to lift themselves out of poverty reaffirms America’s tradition of moral leadership and helps create a more stable, prosperous and just world for us all.

It is incredibly important to act now. With every House seat and 33 Senate seats up for election, it is a critical time to engage in this effort.

With your help, we intend to send a powerful message to the candidates for the House and Senate: There is an energized, organized constituency in the United States that is passionate about fighting global poverty. By interacting with and questioning candidates and their staffers, we can demonstrate broad and informed support for improved U.S. policies.

On behalf of CARE and all of the people we serve, thank you for all you’ve done and all you’ll continue to do. As you use your voice to influence candidates, you are not only building a more just world, you are changing people’s lives.
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- Familiarize yourself with CARE’s work and review materials on CARE Action’s Advocate U platform.
- **Sign up** for CARE Action Emails to keep up to date with our advocacy work.
- Get answers by contacting your CARE Action **regional advocacy coordinator**.
- Remember, the main message is “*your constituents support U.S. foreign assistance.*”
- Learn about your candidate and their positions on these issues.

2. Communicate Effectively

- The key to influence candidates is proving to them you are an engaged, well informed and persistent constituent. It is important to take time to prepare your thoughts, familiarize yourself with your candidate and follow up as many times as it takes.
  
  *No matter how you make contact, be clear that you want to learn what the candidate’s positions are, and you want the candidate to know that he or she has constituents who care deeply about global development and support U.S. foreign assistance.*

3. Generate Attention

- Social media can be a powerful way to publicly connect with candidates during the 2018 midterm elections. As a CARE Action advocate, you can use platforms like Facebook and Twitter to let your candidate know what poverty-fighting issues matter to you. Capture all advocacy-in-action moments, post and tweet the photo(s) on social media, tag @CAREActionNow, add #voteifyoucare, and tag all advocates at the event.

  In this toolkit, you’ll find links to CARE Action’s social media accounts, suggested messaging, and tips for engagement with candidates.

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### Advocate Action Checklist (continued)

#### 4. Meet with a candidate
- Arrange a meeting with a candidate
- Prepare for your meeting
- Engage during meeting
- Follow up after your meeting with your Regional Advocacy Coordinator
- Visit CARE Action’s Advocate U page for additional tips on a successful meeting.

#### 5. Write a Letter to the Editor (LTE) or Op-Ed

#### 6. Attend a Town Hall Meeting

#### 7. Host a Pre-Election Party
- Check out the Pre-Election Party Toolkit
1. Prepare

**Familiarize yourself with CARE:**
CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. Founded in 1945, CARE has more than seven decades of experience helping people prepare for disasters, providing lifesaving assistance when a crisis hits, and helping communities recover after an emergency has passed. CARE places special focus on women and children, who are often disproportionately affected by disasters. Last year, CARE worked in 94 countries and reached more than 80 million people around the world.

CARE Action’s website is a great resource to learn more about our advocacy issues:

- the [foreign assistance budget](#)
- [gender empowerment](#)
- [food and nutrition security](#)
- [humanitarian and emergency assistance](#)
- [sexual and reproductive health and rights](#)

Visit the [Advocate U](#) section of the site for more information.

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**Connect with your Regional Advocacy Coordinator**
CARE has a team of dedicated Regional Advocacy Coordinators (RACs) who are eager to help you get started in your advocacy work in the 2018 election cycle. Your RAC can also provide strategic guidance and support throughout the process.

**Select your region to find your Regional Advocacy Coordinator (RAC):**

- **West:** Jonathan Young – jonathan.young@care.org
- **Midwest:** Katie Kraft – katie.kraft@care.org
- **Northeast:** Savannah Fox – savannah.fox@care.org
- **Southeast:** Whitney Griggs – whitney.griggs@care.org
- **Texas:** Mimi Lee – mimi.lee@care.org

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**Learn about the candidates**
There are multiple ways to reach out to candidates and have your voice heard.

- All 435 members of the House of Representatives are up for re-election.
- Senators serve a six-year term, and therefore only some of the Senate is up for re-election.

The following are excellent sources of information on federal elections. Just click on your state to determine which Senate and House candidates are running in your state and congressional district.

- Review the candidate’s campaign site – what issues are they highlighting? What do they focus on in their press releases?
- If the candidate is an incumbent, search their voting record at Govtrack.us
- Look into who their big donors are at opensecrets.org
2. Communicate Effectively

It is important to remember that your overall goal is to build a relationship with candidates and establish yourself as someone they can trust and respect.

The most important message to convey is: **We support U.S. foreign assistance.**

### Objectives for Candidate Engagement:

- **Offer CARE’s policy statement** – For decades, CARE has complemented our work in the field with advocacy efforts that contribute to our fight against global poverty, multiply our impact and support those in greatest need. Our advocacy work draws from our experience in more than 90 countries to promote policy reforms that foster strong, resilient communities and respond to humanitarian needs. In the U.S., CARE engages with lawmakers across the country and at every level to advocate for a strong foreign assistance budget, food and nutrition security for all, access to family planning and maternal health services, a robust humanitarian response and gender equality and women and girls’ empowerment throughout all U.S. Foreign assistance programs. Worldwide, CARE works alongside poor and marginalized people to create national and regional policy environments that support their efforts to claim their rights and improve their lives.

- **Ask probing questions** – Learn where all candidates, incumbents and challengers alike, stand on issues relating to global development.

- **Build relationships** – Demonstrate that there is an informed and passionate constituency dedicated to fighting global poverty.

### Important reminders:

- Always identify yourself as a **volunteer** for CARE. This removes you from any liabilities.
- When asked a question about CARE, CARE’s work or a policy CARE supports for which you don’t have an answer, tell the person you will get the answer and get back to them. Contact your regional advocacy coordinator.
- If you are contacted by the media directly, please set up an appointment instead of taking the interview immediately. E-mail your regional advocacy coordinator so we can work together to maximize the opportunity.

### DO:

- Be professional
- Build bridges
- Communicate simply, politely, and concisely
- Relate the issue to things that happen in your district or tell a compelling personal story that illustrates why you are advocating for the issue
- Keep records of all your communications and send them to your regional advocacy coordinator

### DON’T:

- Don’t become confrontational
- Don’t forget to have fun!

**We want to hear from you!**

Did you meet with a candidate? Attend a town hall? We want to hear about your experience. CARE has a team of dedicated Regional Advocacy Coordinators (RACs) who are eager to hear from you. Whether your engagement with a candidate about CARE’s issue is at a formal event, like a town hall, or informal, at a state fair, CARE wants to hear about it!

You can find out who your RAC is [here](#).
3. Generate Attention

Social Media Checklist

1. Add the hashtag #voteifyoucare and tag @CAREActionNow in each social copy. Always include a photo or an image with your post and tweet.

2. Follow CARE Action on social media! Feel free to like or share our content with the candidates and current Members of Congress you think need to know about global development and ending poverty. Make sure to tag them in your posts.

3. Follow your Member of Congress and congressional candidates on Twitter, Facebook or other platforms to keep track of what they are working on and talking about. Your candidates and incumbent Members of Congress will likely list social media information on his/her website.

4. Learn how to add a constituent badge to your Facebook page to get better visibility in your district with your Member of Congress.

5. Check out Advocate U to view additional resources about using social media to engage with your Members of Congress.

6. Invite your friends to like @CAREActionNow on Twitter and Facebook.

Sample Tweets:
Feel free to copy and paste these into your own Twitter feed or reword to reflect your own voice. Here are some sample tweets you can copy or modify. Be sure to look up the twitter handle of your candidate or Member of Congress and tag him or her using the @ symbol.

U.S. Foreign Assistance
• @XYZ The U.S. spends < 1% of the budget on global development. Make fighting foreign assistance a priority in the 2018 Midterms #voteifyoucare

Food and Nutrition Security
• @XYZ There’s enough food in the world to feed everyone. Let’s make ending #globalhunger a priority in the 2018 Midterms! http://shout.lt/wzGL #voteifyoucare

Humanitarian Emergencies
• @XYZ 65M people are displaced worldwide due to conflict, famine, and other crises. Let’s prioritize these emergencies in the 2018 Midterms! #voteifyoucare

Gender-based Violence
• @XYZ Up to 70% of women in some communities experience violence in their lifetimes. Please make empowering women and ending GBV a priority in the 2018 Midterms! #voteifyoucare

Maternal health
• @XYZ Healthy moms around the world mean healthy societies. We need candidates who will champion global maternal health programs. #voteifyoucare
Writing your own Facebook messages or tweets? Great! Here are some questions to inspire you:

- How are the midterm elections relevant to fighting poverty globally?
- Why does fighting poverty inspire you to take action? What can your friends and family do to help?
- What will you do when you return home after a candidate's town hall to continue the conversation?
- What's the overall goal of the candidate's campaign? How can you contribute to making sure that global issues are part of their platform?

**Short URLs:**
Short urls (or links) save space in your tweets or other social posts. The following are short urls to pages on CARE Action.org that correspond with the issues you may be asking candidates to learn more about. You can create your own short url with any link by visiting a site like bitly.com.

You can also visit CARE Action’s “Explore the issues” page on Advocate U to learn more:
http://www.careaction.org/advocate-u/issues

- Foreign Assistance: http://www.dontcutlives.org
4. Meet with a Candidate

Face-to-face meetings with a candidate or a senior staff member provide one of the best opportunities to express your opinion and discuss your concerns. These meetings are also a great way to build a relationship that can be continued or resumed in Washington, D.C., should the candidate be elected or re-elected.

Often, candidates will not be able to meet you, but a meeting with the right staffer can be just as effective. All candidates rely heavily on staffers, and often these campaign staffers become the legislative staff if the candidate is elected. Staff control the flow of information to the candidate. Remind your candidate that you vote in their district. Candidates and their staff have huge demands on their time and focus on those who can vote for them.

Our “Engage For Action” section on Advocate U has even more information about successful meetings.

If you run into a candidate at an event, or around town, introduce yourself as a constituent in the candidate’s state or district:

“Hi, I’m ________ and it’s really nice to meet you. I’m an advocate for CARE, a leading humanitarian organization. We have lots of supporters in your district and would like to find a time to come speak with you about addressing global poverty. What’s the best way to reach your office?”

Arranging a Meeting

• Call the campaign office or e-mail a letter, addressed to the candidate, and directed to the attention of the scheduler, requesting a meeting. See sample meeting request letter below.
• Mention that you live in the candidate’s district and that you are a CARE Action advocate. Include the number of CARE supporters in the candidate’s district. Contact your regional advocacy coordinator for detailed information on CARE supporters.
• Make follow-up phone calls to the campaign office until you can agree on a date. If they don’t return your call within two or three days, call again.
• It can be hard to reach campaign offices, so you might have to get creative. Utilize any info on the campaign web site – phone number and email is easiest, but if you can’t get through, try going to the campaign office in person. If you still can’t reach them, do some additional research into the candidate and find out who their supporters and allies are. You might be able to get a meeting request to them via a third party. If you really get stuck, contact your regional advocacy coordinator for help.
• If you cannot meet with the candidate, try to meet with a senior staff member such as the campaign manager or the political director.
• Email your regional advocacy coordinator to let them know that you’ve scheduled a meeting. They can help you prepare and plan your follow-up.
• Follow up with the scheduler and let them know who will be attending your meeting and what the agenda will be. Get directions to the office and provide a number where you can be reached if anything changes.
Sample letter requesting a meeting with a candidate:

John Smith  
326 Plains St.  
Kenosha, WI 53142  

Bob Roberts for Congress Campaign  
Attn: Susie Jones, Scheduler  
425 State St., Room 225  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3341  

June 16, 2018  

Dear Mr. Roberts:  

I am writing on behalf of CARE, the international humanitarian organization dedicated to addressing the root causes of poverty around the world. I would like to request a meeting with you or a member of your staff to discuss CARE’s extensive presence and engagement in Wisconsin, as well as CARE’s deep policy expertise in Washington and the role we play as a trusted resource for policymakers on global issues.  

Here in the State of Wisconsin, we have over 66,000 supporters dedicated to working with candidates and Members of Congress in a bipartisan fashion. Our goal is to combat global poverty, which is at the root of so many global conflicts and crises, while helping poor families and entire communities worldwide gain the tools and training they need for self-sufficiency and a life of dignity and opportunity. As part of this effort, we advocate for greater accountability, transparency and cost-effectiveness in foreign assistance funding, so that we can stretch every tax dollar as far as possible.  

Our security and opportunity as a nation are affected by a number of challenges that the 116th Congress will have to confront, from the greatest refugee crisis since World War II to historic food shortages in the Middle East and Africa. These issues require a smart, effective response. CARE is at the forefront of providing this kind of response, but we need robust leadership in Washington to fully address these critical issues. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you what CARE is doing in Washington and around the world to combat these challenges, and what our extensive network of advocates is doing in Wisconsin and across the country to elevate our policy agenda.  

Please let me know of your availability and I look forward to meeting and speaking with you. Yours sincerely,  

John Smith
Preparing for a Meeting

- Research your candidate to gauge their interest or natural affinity for global development. This can be done through online research, reading the campaign website, or talking to others in your community.
- Use your research to tailor your messaging with the candidate. For example, if they are a veteran, talk about how global development can help enhance global security. Or if they did a study abroad program in Bangladesh, talk about how CARE is working in Bangladesh and around the world to ensure marginalized communities have the tools to rise out of poverty for good.
- Go to CAREAction.org to familiarize yourself with our downloadable issue briefs and questions.
- Practice what you are going to say so you sound natural to the candidate or staff person, and not like you are reading straight from a script. Practicing will build your confidence and add to your effectiveness.

At the Meeting

- Arrive early to give your group plenty of time to get situated before your scheduled meeting time.
- Wear business attire and a CARE pin (if you have one).
- Offer CARE Action issue briefs as a resource to the campaign.
- Be accurate. To build a working relationship and get results, you need to be a credible source of information. Never bluff. If you don’t know something, just say so. Tell them you will find out and get back to them. Your regional advocacy coordinator can help you find the answers you need.
- Be brief. Candidates and their staff appreciate it when you get to the point and respect their time. Your meeting or call might be interrupted, so it’s best to make your main point in the first few minutes. First and foremost, you’re asking them to support global development and humanitarian assistance.
- Make sure to exchange contact information and leave documents and any other appropriate items for the candidate/staffer to become more engaged with your issue. Effective advocacy is based on communication that is simple, polite and to the point.
- Be courteous.
- Be specific. In your communications with candidates and their staff, make a point to mention exactly what you would like them to support and why you are passionate about these issues.
- Be sure to ask questions that get to the candidate’s views on our issues.
- Focus on no more than three issues to cover in any one meeting – even one issue is sometimes enough.
- Most importantly, make sure that by the time the conversation is done, whether it’s two minutes or two hours, they know that you are asking them to be a champion for global poverty.
- More information is available on Advocate U’s “Engage for Action” Section.
Questions to Ask During Meetings
Remember to choose only up to three issue questions and bring along the fact sheets to leave behind. You can find and print CARE Action fact sheets here. It is most critical to include the question on the foreign assistance budget. The others may only be appropriate for candidates who have already developed their positions on these issues.

**BONUS:** These questions can also be used for town halls

**Top Question: Foreign Assistance Budget:**
Less than one percent of the U.S. federal budget funds global poverty-fighting and humanitarian programs, and yet these programs help save millions of lives and make the world a safer place. Do you support preserving the foreign assistance budget?

**Gender Based Violence:**
Violence against women and girls is at epidemic proportions in many countries around the world. At least one out of three women globally will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. Do you support U.S. leadership in implementing a long-term comprehensive strategy to prevent and respond to GBV?

**Food and Nutrition Security:**
The U.S., through legislation like the Global Food Security Act, has led in ensuring that communities around the world have the tools they need to feed themselves. Do you support continuing programs that address long-term food and nutrition security?

**Maternal Health:**
Ensuring women can plan and space their pregnancies can save hundreds of thousands of lives around the world every year. Do you support lifesaving maternal health programs, including access to contraception?

**Humanitarian Emergencies:**
The world is currently facing the biggest refugee crisis in our history with more than 65 million people displaced from their homes. Do you support humanitarian response programs?

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**Following up After a Meeting**
It is important to report your engagement with candidates on CARE’s behalf. CARE has a team of dedicated Regional Advocacy Coordinators (RACs) who are eager to hear all about your advocacy work in the 2018 election cycle. Your RAC can also provide personalized guidance and support throughout the process. Whether your engagement with a candidate about CARE’s issue is at a formal event, like a town hall, or informal, at a state fair, CARE wants to hear about it! You find out who your RAC is here.

After meeting with a candidate or a staff member, it is important to maintain contact to help bolster the relationship you are building with the candidate’s office.

- Send a thank you/follow up e-mail to the person with whom you met, citing specifics from your meeting.
- Thank the person you met with for listening to your concerns, especially if the candidate takes action. Commend the candidate publicly, including on their Facebook page, letters to the editor, etc.

Remember that if your candidate is helpful and you praise them publicly, next time they may help even more. The ultimate goal is to build a positive, long-term relationship.

- Get the name of the staff person you speak to and try to deal with the same person each time.
- Provide additional information on global development issues as needed by e-mail.
Tips for Writing Letters to the Editors (LTEs)

- Keep in mind the many different types of publications – national, local and daily newspapers.
- Be concise (typically around 150-175 words max) and credible, using statistics and personal experience where appropriate.
- Refer to recent stories published in the paper. The letter to the editor typically references an article or editorial published in the last day or two and either agrees with the writer’s thesis (usually adding additional detail or supporting information) or takes issue with the facts or arguments presented in the article (and offers an alternative point of view). Always be respectful and constructive.
- Include your name, address, e-mail and phone number.
- Once submitted, share with your regional advocacy coordinator! We would love to highlight your LTE on our platforms.
- You can also visit Advocate U to learn more about how to write an LTE.
- If your LTE gets published, post a photo of your published LTE or share/retweet the news outlet’s tweet/post of your LTE, tag @CAREActionNow, and add #voteifyoucare.

Sample LTE for Midterm Elections:

The Bergen Record
Letter to the Editor
October 9, 2018

To the Editor:

Your paper has done a thorough job of providing extensive coverage of the mid-term national elections, which are just four weeks away, including yesterday’s article on [insert article title here]. While much attention is given to domestic issues, I fail to see any mention of an issue that should be on your front page each and every day – global development.

I support CARE and am dismayed that 836 million people still live on less than $1.25 a day. What’s more, 830 women die every day from the complications of pregnancy and childbirth, while most of these deaths are preventable. The impact of poverty on human lives, not to mention global stability and prosperity, is enormous. The media should be covering these issues more often, and candidates running for office next month should let us know how they’ll tackle them when they get to Washington. I plan on raising this issue with my local officials and hope that this paper will do the same.

Pete Kraft
Fort Lee, NJ
6. Attend a Town Hall Meeting

The easiest way to meet a candidate for Congress is to attend their public events. We urge you to take every opportunity to attend the events hosted by candidates from both political parties.

Find an Upcoming Local Event or Town Hall Meeting:

- Call the campaign headquarters and ask when the candidate will be in your area.
- Check the candidate’s website and social media platforms to view upcoming events.

Best Practices for Town Hall Meetings:

- Prepare your question/comment in advance.
- Do your homework on the elected official.
- At the event, put yourself in a position to ask a question. If you brought a friend, station yourselves in different places to ensure that at least one of you is called upon.
- Avoid simple yes or no questions, but instead ask in a way that requires them to share what they think and/or what they plan to do in office.
- If you ask questions about specific legislation, be prepared to quickly explain what the legislation does. Thousands of bills are introduced each Congress, and Members of Congress and candidates don’t have them all memorized.
- Ask a question based on an action – “What will you do…?” What action will you take…?”
- Join the rope line. Candidates love to shake hands. This is another opportunity to ask your question.
- If you cannot talk directly to the candidate, try to talk to a senior staff person such as the political director or the campaign manager.
- Follow-up on the town hall with a phone call to candidate’s campaign office – this will help you stand out and get your voice heard.

Facebook Town Halls

- Submit your questions before and during the town hall
- Invite fellow advocates to participate
- Ask fellow advocates to submit their questions
- When multiple advocates ask the same question, this would be a good opportunity to amplify that question or concern by reframing it a little and building on the previous question. For example, if someone has already asked if the candidate supports foreign assistance, say something like:

  “I’m really glad this question was already asked, because I’m also a big supporter of the 1% of the budget that goes toward development and humanitarian programs. How are you going to show leadership on this issue and ensure that the U.S. continues to actively make this a healthier, safer, and more just world for all of us?”

DO:

- Discuss the importance of public policy approaches to a broadly-stated issue.
- Discuss how CARE Action has been trying to educate candidates about these issues.
- Be clear that CARE Action is encouraging candidates to develop a plan for addressing these issues.
- Point out that these are important issue to voters and they deserve to know how candidates would try to address them.
- Engage both candidates equally.
- Be prepared. Do your homework on the candidates and on the issues.
- Be polite. Your question will be best received if it is phrased respectfully and tactfully.

DON’T:

- Don’t be rude or insulting.
- Don’t suggest that global poverty is or should be a partisan issue.
- Don’t endorse or express support for one candidate over another on CARE’s behalf.
7. Host a Pre-Election Party

Hosting or attending a pre-election party is an opportunity to take concrete actions to educate yourself and your community on the importance of electing leaders in Washington who are champions for women and girls around the world. CARE is seen as a credible voice on Capitol Hill because our policy positions are grounded in our 70+ year experience in the field. Now we need to take our message, backed with this tremendous expertise, to the campaign trail, to make sure that voters are informed and that candidates know that voters are paying attention.

A pre-election party is an opportunity to inform and engage friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors in meaningful discussion about candidates – how they align with CARE’s mission to save lives, overcome poverty, and achieve social justice.

We created an event guide all about hosting a pre-election party, including a to-do list that will take you through every step of the way to a fun and impactful event. You can find it [here](#).

**If you’re interested in hosting a pre-election party, contact your CARE Action regional advocacy coordinator.**

“Educating ourselves before Election Day is both our duty and a way to honor our foremothers who fought to give us the right to vote!”

—JESSICA STEED, CARE Action Advocate
To help give you the big picture, here is some basic information about global poverty, the unique vulnerabilities of women and girls and current U.S. foreign assistance efforts.

**The U.S. foreign assistance budget comprises just 1 percent of the federal budget – just one cent of every budget dollar.**

The world is currently facing the biggest refugee crisis in our history with more than 65 million displaced people. Over 20 million people face famine conditions in South Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria and Somalia.

830 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

One million newborns die every year on their day of birth, and close to two million die in the first week of life. Most of these deaths are preventable.

Over 815 million people around the world do not have enough food to eat.

Child marriage affects 15 million girls annually, impeding their educations, livelihoods and choice of when, if and whom to marry. Girls who marry young are more likely to face domestic violence and negative health consequences resulting from early pregnancy and childbirth.

Globally, 1.2 billion people live in absolute poverty and most of them are women and girls.

At least one out of three women globally has experienced gender-based violence in her lifetime.

Every 104 seconds, a woman dies from a pregnancy related complication. These deaths are almost entirely preventable. Access to contraception could prevent up to 30% of maternal deaths per year.