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No person should have to suffer because he or she does not have access to basic necessities like sufficient food, clean drinking water, and essential medical care. I firmly believe that we have the ability to significantly reduce extreme poverty at home and globally, but it will not happen until more people are willing to speak up and act on behalf of those who cannot.

As the president of a women's college, I am particularly sensitive to the disproportionate effect of poverty on women. According to the United Nations, some estimates indicate that 70 percent of the world's poor are women. Those that can find employment are not paid as much as men. Additionally, as the Half the Sky Movement has gone to great lengths to document and combat, too many women in the developing world are subjected to terrible forms of violence and other forms of oppression.

I joined the Presidents' Pledge Against Global Poverty because I know that this does not have to be the case. Together, we can take dramatic steps towards making sure more women and girls are healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Helen Drinan  
President