

A Historic And Lifesaving Commitment To Fight HIV/AIDS

President Bush Signs Bipartisan Legislation To Reauthorize PEPFAR To Combat Global HIV/AIDS

Today, President Bush signed into law H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act. This legislation responds to the President's call last year to expand our commitment to this successful program for five additional years. In 2003, President Bush launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to combat global HIV/AIDS – the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in human history. Today's legislation will dramatically increase the financial commitment to this fight – authorizing up to \$48 billion to combat global HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

- **PEPFAR is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in human history.** When the President launched this initiative in 2003, about 50,000 people in all of Sub-Saharan Africa were receiving anti-retroviral treatment. Today, PEPFAR supports lifesaving anti-retroviral treatment for nearly 1.7 million people in the region – and tens of thousands more around the world, from Asia to Eastern Europe.
- **There is no way to quantify PEPFAR's greatest achievement – the spread of hope.** Spreading hope is in America's security interests, because the only way our enemies can recruit people to their dark ideology is to exploit despair. It is also in our moral interests – because Americans believe that to whom much is given, much is required.

Today's Legislation Preserves The Principles That Have Made PEPFAR A Success

This new legislation will expand access to lifesaving antiretroviral drugs, prevent millions of new HIV infections, provide compassionate care to millions of people affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children, and bolster efforts to help developing nations combat other devastating diseases like malaria and tuberculosis.

PEPFAR will maintain our insistence on results and allow us to set clear goals. Under this legislation, the next phase of the American people's generous commitment to those suffering from HIV/AIDS will support:

- Treatment for at least 3 million people;
- Prevention of 12 million new infections; and
- Care for 12 million people, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children.

This bill will expand the health-care systems supported by PEPFAR by committing to train at least 140,000 new health-care workers to provide HIV prevention, treatment, and care. These men and women will help Africa curb the HIV epidemic – along with many other health challenges facing the continent.

This legislation will help us combat the diseases that complicate HIV/AIDS. It commits \$4 billion to fight tuberculosis (TB), which is the leading killer of Africans living with HIV. The bill will further allow us to expand highly effective international TB programs, further promote TB-HIV program integration, and address MDR-TB and the newly emerged threat of XDR-TB.

- **This bill also pledges an additional \$5 billion to our Malaria Initiative.** In 2007 alone, the President's Malaria Initiative reached an estimated 25 million people in Africa with lifesaving malaria prevention or treatment interventions, including more than 17 million people protected with indoor residual spraying programs. There is now growing optimism within African countries that malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa can be controlled.

Today's legislation will help reduce HIV's deadly stigma and show the world that it is possible for people to "live positively" with HIV/AIDS. This bill eliminates a statutory restriction that has kept HIV-positive people from entering the United States without a waiver.

Abstinence and Be faithful (AB) programs are essential components of the U.S. Government's comprehensive,

evidence-based, and balanced "ABC" (Abstinence, Be faithful, and use Condoms) approach to preventing sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS. The legislation will restore meaningful funding for AB programs and maintain the core principle of AB as part of an effective prevention approach. For example, a decrease in sexual activity among unmarried young people in Kenya has helped reduce that nation's HIV infection rates by roughly two-thirds over the past decade.

- This legislation creates the expectation that 50 percent of funding to prevent sexual transmission will be spent on AB programs in countries with generalized epidemics.

The anti-prostitution and sex-trafficking policy requirement is critical to the effectiveness of our strategy to fight global HIV/AIDS. Prostitution and sex trafficking are abusive and dehumanizing to women, and they fuel the spread of HIV. This legislation preserves the current law requiring that organizations receiving U.S. Government money:

- Do not use PEPFAR funds to promote or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution or sex trafficking; and
- Have a policy opposing prostitution and sex trafficking.

Faith- and other community-based partners are highly effective in combating the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. The legislation's strengthened conscience clause will ensure continued participation by faith- and other community-based partners, which are uniquely positioned to promote HIV/AIDS stigma reduction and prevention messages, as well as to provide counseling and testing, home care, clinical services, and other interventions. The bill ensures that these organizations will not be required to participate in or refer to any program or activity to which they have a religious or moral objection and ensures that they will not be discriminated against in procurement for refusing to do so.

America Has Led An Unprecedented Effort To Combat HIV/AIDS Around The World

PEPFAR's success is rooted in U.S. support for local programs that use the power of partnerships between governments, foundations, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, and the private sector. Last year, 87 percent of PEPFAR partners were indigenous organizations, and nearly a quarter were faith-based.

- PEPFAR has also:
 - Supported more than 33 million counseling and testing sessions for men, women, and children;
 - Supported care for nearly 7 million people, including millions of orphans and vulnerable children;
 - Supported prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission interventions for women during nearly 12.7 million pregnancies from Fiscal Year 2004 to Fiscal Year 2007;
 - Supported prevention of an estimated 194,000 infant infections; and
 - Allowed nearly 200,000 children in Africa to be born HIV-free.

As a result of President Bush's leadership, in June 2007 the United States and other G8 nations set ambitious goals to support treatment for a total of 5 million HIV/AIDS-infected individuals, prevent 24 million new infections, and care for 24 million people, including 10 million orphans and vulnerable children, and to cut malaria-related deaths by 50 percent in 30 countries.

Earlier this year, President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Africa where they were able to witness the effectiveness of this program firsthand. They had the opportunity to meet with patients and see the hope this program has given them, in addition to visiting with doctors, nurses, and caregivers of all faiths working to save the lives of their fellow citizens.