



A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



Take Action!

February 8, 2008

Urge your Members to Improve Global HIV Legislation

TAKE ACTION NOW! The [House Foreign Affairs Committee](http://foreignaffairs.house.gov) (<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov>) will consider Chairman Lantos' draft legislation to reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) on Thursday, February 14th. Your Member is on the [House Foreign Affairs Committee](http://foreignaffairs.house.gov) and will make critical decisions regarding this lifesaving program. Please [visit the CRS Action Center now](http://actioncenter.crs.org) (<http://actioncenter.crs.org>) to contact your Members and urge them to:

1. **Maintain the bipartisan consensus** around the successful PEPFAR program that has saved millions of lives.
2. **Remove provisions** in Chairman Lantos' draft bill that call for the integration and coordination of HIV prevention, care and treatment services with "reproductive health" and "family planning" services and that eliminate any designated funding for effective, evidence-based prevention programs focusing on abstinence and behavior change.
3. **Retain provisions** in Chairman Lantos' draft bill that significantly increase funding for PEPFAR, strengthen anti-malaria and anti-tuberculosis programming, build up the healthcare workforce in affected countries and increase food and nutrition programs for affected populations.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO MY FAITH? Our faith tradition as Catholics requires us to care for "the least of these" and to uphold the life and dignity of all people. People affected by HIV or suffering from AIDS need and deserve our love and care just as Jesus called on us to care for those who are "hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison." Catholic social teaching instructs us to live in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. Pope John Paul II reminded us that we must commit ourselves to this common good: "That is to say the good of all and each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

WHAT HAS PEPFAR ACHIEVED? Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has saved over 100,000 lives because of PEPFAR. Men and women who were on the brink of death are now leading normal lives, caring for their children and contributing to their communities because they are on antiretroviral therapy. Orphaned children are being cared for, going to school and embracing a bright future. Youth are being educated about risky behaviors and how abstinence-until-marriage and mutual fidelity within marriage is the most effective way to prevent HIV infections. [Visit the CRS website](http://crs.org/public-policy/hiv_aids.cfm) (http://crs.org/public-policy/hiv_aids.cfm) for more information about PEPFAR and its accomplishments.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S POSITION? The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and CRS are advocating for several important provisions to be included in the reauthorization of PEPFAR. The House bill currently under consideration includes some of these provisions but eliminates others. [Read the USCCB/CRS letter to House Foreign Affairs Committee Members](http://crs.org/public-policy/pdf/2008-02-PEPFAR-Ltr.pdf) (<http://crs.org/public-policy/pdf/2008-02-PEPFAR-Ltr.pdf>) for more details. USCCB/CRS urge Members to:

1. **MAINTAIN funding for promotion of abstinence-until-marriage and behavior change programs as a key HIV prevention strategy as reflected in the original PEPFAR legislation. Chairman Lantos' draft bill eliminates this dedicated funding.** Based on CRS' experience, without designated funding, proven programs that promote abstinence-until-marriage and mutual fidelity within marriage will be under-resourced and the high quality Church-based health structures and services will be sidelined in the battle against HIV.
2. **REJECT provisions that mandate or give preferential treatment in awarding PEPFAR funding to groups that perform family planning or reproductive health services. Chairman Lantos' draft includes these objectionable provisions.** USCCB and CRS are very concerned about efforts to redefine PEPFAR's mission to require HIV prevention services to include family planning and reproductive health services. If these services were mandated or given preferential treatment, then CRS and other religious groups would be unable to participate in PEPFAR. Hundreds of thousands of patients served through our networks, especially in the poorest, most remote areas of the globe, would face interrupted or even cessation of life-saving therapy.
3. **RETAIN funding increases for PEPFAR and EXPAND funding for nutrition programs that benefit people affected by HIV. The proposed House bill includes these provisions.** While PEPFAR currently provides some funding for therapeutic feeding, it is not available to all who need it because of insufficient funding.

For more information, contact:

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