

October 14, 2002

The Honorable Henry Hyde  
United States House of Representatives  
2110 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-1306

Sent via U.S. Mail and facsimile (202-225-1166)

Dear Chairman Hyde:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the National Organizations Responding to AIDS Coalition, a coalition of over 175 health, labor, religious, professional and advocacy groups that represent a broad consensus on HIV- and AIDS-related policy, legislation and funding, and other organizations concerned about the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, we write to express our strong support for legislation pending in Congress that would authorize essential programs to fight HIV/AIDS throughout the world. We urge you to do everything possible to see that this legislation is completed before Congress adjourns later this month. The specific bills involved include HR 2069, sponsored by Representatives Henry Hyde, Jim Leach, Barbara Lee, and Tom Lantos; and S. 2649 and S. 2525, sponsored by Senators John Kerry, Bill Frist, and Edward Kennedy.

The U.S. must play a leadership role in addressing the global scourge wrought by HIV/AIDS. Forty million people are living with HIV/AIDS throughout the world and over twenty million have died. Approximately 800,000 infants are infected each year, 14 million children have become orphans and millions more will be orphaned in the decade ahead.

In addition to the staggering human toll brought on by HIV/AIDS, a just-released report from the National Intelligence Council finds that the rates of HIV infection in five of the world's most populous countries are rising with such speed that they pose potential security threats to their regions and to the United States. According to the report, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Russia, India and China - countries that together include more than 40 percent of the world's population - are seeing their infection rates skyrocket. By 2010, the number of HIV-infected people in these countries will grow to an estimated 59 to 75 million.

To fully address the HIV crisis that is raging throughout the world, a comprehensive plan and strategy to combat the AIDS pandemic is necessary. Authorization is needed for the broad range of U.S. global HIV/AIDS programs, including our support to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; our bilateral HIV/AIDS programs managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development; the global HIV/AIDS activities conducted by several key agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the range of other U.S. agencies involved in this effort. In addition, it is critical to ensure that appropriate authorization levels are included across all of these programs to enable the U.S. to adequately respond to this global pandemic.

Much work has been done to shepherd these bills through the process over the past two years and these bills have received strong bipartisan support. We would squander a critical opportunity if Congress were to leave this year without completing this essential legislation.

We urge your strong support for the passage of this legislation and urge you to do everything possible to complete the work on these bills before Congress leaves later this month. It is urgent that this life-saving legislation be passed without delay.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Fred Dillon with the San Francisco AIDS Foundation at 415-487-3081 or Michele Sumilas at the Global Health Council at 202-833-5900.

Sincerely,

ACT UP East Bay, Oakland  
ACT UP Philadelphia  
Advocates for Youth  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDS Treatment Data Network  
AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition  
American Association for Marriage and  
Family Therapy (AAMFT)  
American Nurses Association  
American Public Health Association  
Center for Health and Gender Equity  
(CHANGE)  
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS  
Foundation  
Episcopal Church, USA  
Essential Action  
Florida AIDS Action  
Foundation for Integrative AIDS  
Research (FIAR)  
Gay and Lesbian Medical Association  
Gay Men's Health Crisis  
Global AIDS Action Network  
Global AIDS Alliance  
Global Health Council  
Global Justice  
Health GAP  
HIV Medicine Association  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
National Association of Social Workers  
Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation  
Plan USA  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington  
Office  
Project Inform  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
Student Global AIDS Campaign  
The Alan Guttmacher Institute  
The NAMES Project Foundation  
Treatment Action Group