



A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



March 31, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO VOTE ON GLOBAL AIDS BILL: PLEASE PRESERVE THE BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS

TAKE ACTION NOW! Please visit the CRS Action Center (<http://actioncenter.crs.org>) now to urge your Representative to preserve the bipartisan consensus of the bill passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee and reiterate support for:

- Authorizing \$50 billion for PEPFAR programs over the next five years;
- Expanding the integration of food and nutrition into treatment programs that will benefit people affected by HIV;
- Providing resources to address the shortage of healthcare workers and strengthen healthcare systems;
- Restoring a balanced approach to HIV prevention that includes effective abstinence and behavior change programs;
- Preventing inclusion of mandates that would integrate family planning and reproductive health services into HIV prevention, care and treatment. Such provisions would effectively exclude CRS and other religious organizations from participation in PEPFAR and reduce the effectiveness of prevention programs.



Last November, I met a woman from Zambia named Bridget Chisenga. Bridget's husband died of AIDS, and she expected to meet the same fate. Then she went to a clinic operated by Catholic Relief Services, funded by the American people. Today, Bridget is healthy. She has a job at the clinic, where she helps provide AIDS medicine to others. I want our fellow citizens to hear what she said: "This face is alive and vibrant because of your initiative. I would like to thank you."

*President George W. Bush
February 14, 2008*

WHY IS PEPFAR IMPORTANT? Because of PEPFAR, CRS has saved more than 100,000 lives through antiretroviral treatment and provides HIV care and support services for another 250,000 HIV positive people. 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. More than 60,000 orphaned children are being cared for, going to school and embracing a bright future. Nearly 350,000 youth have been 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.

WHAT DOES PEPFAR HAVE TO DO WITH 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 IS THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON PEPFAR? The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and CRS are urging the House of Representatives to preserve the bipartisan consensus of the bill passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Read the USCCB/CRS letter: http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/2008-3-7_pepfar_hb_5501.pdf.

WHERE DOES PEPFAR STAND NOW? Both the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed their respective PEPFAR reauthorization bills. The House is expected to vote on the bill as early as this week. USCCB/CRS will continue to seek improvements to the bill and fend off attempts to weaken it.

For more information, contact:

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