



A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



Take Action!

June 27, 2007

HELP FIGHT GLOBAL POVERTY: SENATE COMMITTEE VOTES ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE BILL JUNE 28

TAKE ACTION NOW! Visit the CRS Action Center before June 28– <http://actioncenter.crs.org> – to contact [Senators on the Appropriations Committee](#) as they consider the FY 2008 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill and urge them to make the following changes in the bill approved by the House last week:

- Remove the provision that cancels the current 7 per cent allocation (one third of HIV and AIDS prevention funds) for abstinence-until-marriage programs in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); and
- Reinstate the Mexico City Protocol so that U.S. assistance will not be channeled through organizations performing and promoting abortion as family planning.

WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: On June 28, the Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to consider the fiscal year 2008 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that the House of Representatives passed last week. The bill includes critical funding for international assistance programs that provide lifesaving and life-changing services to the poorest people in our world such as emergency assistance, health, education, agriculture and small loan programs as well as treatment to people infected by HIV.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) welcome some new policy directions the House has included in the bill, including increased funding for programs that address chronic poverty through long-term development and a shift towards greater humanitarian and social assistance for Colombia, a country wracked by war for more than forty years.

CRS and the USCCB have **serious concerns** about some changes the House made to current foreign aid policy.

1. The House reversed an important provision regarding abstinence-until-marriage programs in PEPFAR, the U.S. government initiative that provides anti-retroviral therapy to people affected by HIV in poor countries. Currently, 7 percent of PEPFAR funding, or one third of all prevention funding available within PEPFAR, is allocated for abstinence-until-marriage programs. These programs have proven to be very effective in Africa to change behavior and ultimately save lives. The House bill stripped the specific allocation for these abstinence programs. Without the specific allocation for abstinence programs, these critical education and behavior change programs will likely go unfunded.
2. The House rescinded an important provision known as the "Mexico City Protocol" that prevents U.S. family planning assistance to be channeled through groups that perform and promote abortions as family planning.

CRS and the USCCB urge the Senate to reverse the changes made to the abstinence provisions within PEPFAR and the Mexico City Protocol. [Click here to read the USCCB/CRS letter to the Senate.](#)

WHY WE SHOULD GET INVOLVED: Catholic social teaching is rooted in the fundamental dignity of every human life. As Catholics, we are called to uphold human dignity and to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters worldwide who are suffering because of war, disease, natural disaster and poverty. In response to this call, CRS and the USCCB are promoting the [Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty](#) that seeks to address some of the root causes of global poverty, including aid, trade and debt. Visit our website to join our Campaign today: www.usccb.org/globalpoverty.

For further information contact:

*Tina Rodousakis, CRS Grassroots Advocacy Manager, 1-800-235-2772 x 7462; trodousa@crs.org or
Fr. Andrew Small, USCCB Policy Advisor, International Economic Development, (202) 541-3153; asmall@usccb.org*