



## THE AIDS INSTITUTE

**National Office** - Washington, DC: 202-835-8373

**Administrative Office** - Tampa, FL: 813-258-5929

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**Media Contacts:** Jamila Taylor, (202) 835-8373 [JTaylor@theaidsinstitute.org](mailto:JTaylor@theaidsinstitute.org)

### **The AIDS Institute Praises the House of Representatives for Passing the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill**

*Despite efforts to undermine comprehensive prevention and family planning provisions included in the legislation*

**WASHINGTON, DC** - This morning the U.S. House of Representatives passed the \$34.2 billion FY 2008 State-Foreign Operations appropriations bill without objection. The bill included \$5.08 billion for HIV/AIDS, an increase of \$1.25 billion over FY 2007 funding levels. \$550 million was dedicated to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. Within the Child Survival and Health Programs Fund, an additional \$600 million is also included for HIV/AIDS. "We are very pleased with this outcome in the House of Representatives," stated Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. He continued: "These funds will enhance and expand the critically important work funded by the United States in resource challenged nations in the fight against AIDS, TB, and Malaria. It also provides a challenge to other rich nations to do more, following the example set by the United States. These diseases will be fully addressed only when the world's richest nations, working together, provide the necessary resources and technical assistance to the world's poorest countries. We all know how important it is to human health and the world's security for the impact of AIDS, TB, and Malaria to be minimized and some day, eradicated."

Other important global health programs also received increases within the bill. Those included family planning, programs combating XDR-TB, malaria, and maternal and child health. In fact, Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ) offered an amendment to include an additional \$50 million to combat tuberculosis. The amendment passed by voice vote.

In addition to funding allocations for global health programs, the FY 2008 State-Foreign Operations appropriations bill also includes very important provisions regarding the expansion of the availability of contraceptives and the employment of comprehensive prevention strategies. The contraceptives provision would expand access to contraceptives in poor, impoverished nations by providing an exemption from the Mexico City Policy, also known as the Global Gag Rule, solely for USAID-donated contraceptives and condoms. This provision does not provide financial assistance of any kind to family planning organizations. It simply allows organizations to receive donations of contraceptives and condoms from USAID.

The abstinence-only-until-marriage provision allows for greater effectiveness and flexibility in the fight against HIV/AIDS by allowing the President to waive the restriction under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) that mandates at least 1/3 of HIV prevention funding is limited to abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. This will allow U.S.-funded programs to better respond to the differing features of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in each country through more comprehensive prevention strategies.

Representative Joseph Pitts (R-PA) offered an amendment to remove the new provision that would allow employment of contraceptives, while Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) offered an amendment to remove the provision regarding the waiver for the abstinence-only-until-marriage earmark as part of prevention funding. Both of these attempts failed after intense floor debate from both sides of the aisle.

“We cannot stress enough how important it is for the United States to move away from restrictive policies on comprehensive sex education and prevention mechanisms”, stated Jamila Taylor, Global Policy Coordinator for The AIDS Institute. “The government must recognize that it is costing thousands—possibly millions of lives. It is a relief to see that the House of Representatives voted to keep these two very important provisions of the State-Foreign operations appropriations bill in tact; provisions that will affect the lives of women, men, and their families impacted by HIV/AIDS abroad”, Taylor continued.

Copello concluded: “Our efforts will now focus on ensuring this bill becomes law and that its provisions are appropriately and fully implemented.”

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*For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy work, please contact  
The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at: [Info@theaidsinstitute.org](mailto:Info@theaidsinstitute.org) or [www.TheAIDSInstitute.org](http://www.TheAIDSInstitute.org)*

*The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit and nonpartisan agency that promotes action for social change  
through public policy research, advocacy and education.*