ACTION ALERT

Call Your Florida State Representative and Senators to Save Funding for HIV/AIDS Initiatives and Programs

WHAT: Statewide Action Campaign

WHEN: Monday, March 3rd through Friday, March 7th, 2008.

WHY: On February 1st Governor Crist released his proposed budget for Fiscal 2008 – 2009. On March 4th the state legislature is scheduled to convene and one of their first items of business is to consider funding cuts! According to some estimates the legislature may have to cut as much as 2 billion dollars from the budget. It is unknown how much of the anticipated cuts will be in HIV/AIDS programs.

The AIDS Institute is coordinating a statewide action campaign in order to raise awareness in Tallahassee regarding the importance of supporting HIV/AIDS initiatives and programs. While we do not yet know what programs will be targeted for funding cuts, it is important to execute preemptive damage control before cuts are proposed. In situations characterized by strong financial constraints, it is very difficult to restore funding levels once legislators have reached an agreement over where to slash funding. Thus we must act now! Those living with HIV/AIDS in Florida need your participation in this important statewide campaign.

Among the few cost saving measures already proposed is eliminating a $500,000 allotment for HIV testing in jails across the state. Unless action is taken, those funds will no longer be available. Yet, According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Prison Statistics, Florida has seen the largest increase of HIV and AIDS incidence in the country over the last six years for which data are available. Surely, this is not a program that can afford to be cut!
**Message:** Tell them why you support funding HIV/AIDS programs and tell them that you are a constituent who votes! Let them know which programs are the most important to you. Do not be afraid to be personable and tell your story. They depend on your vote and thus will respect what you have to say, but do not feel obligated to reveal information that you are uncomfortable sharing.

**How:** Contact your Representatives and Senators however you prefer. You can call, email, or write a letter. You may also visit their local offices in your community.

To find your Representatives/Senators and their contact information, log onto [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov) and [www.flhouse.gov](http://www.flhouse.gov). You may need to know your nine (9) digit zip-code in order to find out who is your Representative or Senator. You can look up your nine (9) digit zip-code with the United States Postal Service at: [http://www.usps.com/zip4/](http://www.usps.com/zip4/).

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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 or 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.