

Tauscher Voices Support for an Increased Commitment to Stopping the Global Spread of HIV/AIDS

Washington, DC –Rep. Ellen Tauscher submitted the following statement for the record today in support of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act. The legislation builds on the U.S. commitment to combat the spread of these diseases across the globe.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kevin Lawlor, 202/225-1880

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www.tauscher.house.gov

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Rep. Ellen Tauscher

4.2.08

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5501, the Lantos-Hyde U.S. Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

The world has achieved more in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the past decade than it has since this deadly epidemic began nearly 30 years ago, due in no small part to the efforts of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), combined with Congressional enactment of the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2003.

As a nation, we have provided care for more than 6 million HIV-infected individuals, including nearly 3 million orphans. We have prevented 150,000 infant infections by providing mother-to-child HIV transmission prevention services for more than 10 million pregnancies. And we have provided anti-retroviral drugs for nearly 1.5 million men, women, and children.

Yet in an era where 40 million men, women, and children are infected with HIV worldwide, and where infections continue at a rate of nearly 6,000 per day, U.S. global leadership on HIV/AIDS — as well as the associated diseases of TB and malaria — remains as important as ever.

I quote Stephen Lewis, the former United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa: "the international community must now finally keep its word and mobilize for global AIDS treatment delivery; it is a moral imperative that global leaders and institutions keep their promises to scale up AIDS services with urgency and increased resources."

I believe passage of H.R. 5501 displays our commitment to doing just that.

This legislation authorizes \$50 billion over the next 5 years, including \$41 billion for HIV/AIDS, \$4 billion for tuberculosis, and \$5 billion for malaria, and is designed to move these programs from the "emergency" phase, towards greater sustainability.

In particular, I am pleased to see a strengthened focus on the needs of women and girls, and prevention and treatment programs targeted towards this population — including, for the first time, the provision of HIV/AIDS testing and counseling services in family planning programs. I would note that concerns have been raised that the bill's language would block HIV testing and counseling services from being offered by family planning providers that are not compliant with the misguided "global gag rule" policy, and I hope that Congressional intent can be clarified that this is not the case.

I am also supportive of provisions that remove the requirement targeting one-third of prevention funding towards abstinence-only programs. Prevention programs must be evidence-based, rather than ideologically-based.

This legislation doubles, to \$2 billion per year, the U.S. contribution to the multilateral Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The Global Fund, with its emphasis on stimulating a global commitment under an umbrella

organization with a truly international AIDS budget, is the best chance the world has of combating this epidemic. I urge my colleagues and the President to ensure that these new authorization levels are fully funded.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the bipartisan work of the Foreign Affairs Committee, including its new Chairman, Howard Berman, and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. I also want to recognize and commemorate the leadership of our dear friend, Congressman Tom Lantos, whose commitment to the most vulnerable people worldwide continues to be felt through our work on HIV/AIDS. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5501.

Madam Speaker, I yield back.

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