

December 23, 2008

Dear President-Elect Obama:

As advocates engaged in the work of ensuring the most effective and appropriate global HIV/AIDS response that the United States can offer, we call upon you to appoint a new Global AIDS Coordinator within 30 days of assuming the Presidency. We have reached a critical moment in the history of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic as this next phase of PEPFAR is set into motion through the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-293). In order to fulfill the mission laid out therein, and to lead the response from an emergency approach to one of sustainability, new leadership is required.

From the outset, PEPFAR has been guided by a disease-specific medical model in lieu of a broader human rights framework and public health approach which is needed to more effectively address the epidemic. While excellence in medical care and services are a fundamental element in the global HIV/AIDS response, the new strategies undertaken by the Coordinator will have more impact if they are guided by a keen insight into the social complexities which drive the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We cannot treat our way out of the gender inequalities, social and economic disparities and stigma and discrimination which fuel this global pandemic. The inherent strategy steering the U.S. response to global HIV/AIDS must embrace all of these aspects— medical, social science, public health and human rights— to create and oversee PEPFAR-funded programs around the world. A new Coordinator that upholds the highest standards of prevention, care and treatment, relying on strategies and protocols that are evidence-based, to accurately respond to the needs of those who are most affected will make more headway than has been achieved in the past.

Ending the epidemic requires going beyond the medical model currently driving the U.S. global HIV/AIDS response, which means appointing a new Global AIDS Coordinator who can provide that strategic vision from the top.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
Africa Action
African American Health Alliance
AIDS Action Baltimore, Inc
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
American Jewish World Service
Americans for Informed Democracy
Associação para o Planeamento da Família, Portugal (Portuguese Family Planning Association)
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
ATHENA Network
BOCS Foundation
Catholics for Choice
Cave Institute
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Center for HIV Law and Policy
Center for Women's Global Leadership, USA
CHOICE, for youth and sexuality
Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights (CSBR)
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
Danish NGO Network on AIDS and Development

Families USA
Family Violence Prevention Fund
Feminist Majority
Global AIDS Alliance
Harm Reduction Coalition
Health GAP (NY)
HIVictorious, Inc
Housing Works
Human Rights Campaign
Interact Worldwide
International Center for Research on Women
International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS
International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region
International Women's Health Coalition
Irish Family Planning Association
L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center
Medical Facility Aid
Physicians for Human Rights
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Planned Parenthood Los Angeles
Population Action International
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Secular Coalition for America
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
United Nations Foundation
Wo/Men's Access to Vital Education and Services (WAVES) Int'l., Inc.
Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) - NEW WAYS
Women of Reform Judaism
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases