

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 31, 2008

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

We are requesting that we be consulted before the Senate enters into any unanimous consent agreements regarding S.2731 or its House companion HR 5501, to reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). We ask that our rights be preserved to object to any future unanimous consent agreements or rule waivers regarding this bill. The PEPFAR reauthorization bills under consideration in the House and Senate contain dramatic policy reversals coupled with irresponsible spending levels. This combination prevents our support for reauthorization of the program that, until now, has been a rare model of foreign aid success. Our concerns are many, but the most serious problems are as follows:

- **Irresponsible spending:** The bills more than triple the current spending level from \$15 billion over 5 years to more than \$50 billion over five years.
- **Elimination of safeguards on how funding is spent:** The bills eliminate the safeguards in the current law requiring money to be spent on life-saving HIV/AIDS treatment and proven prevention methods.
- **Expansion beyond the most needy countries:** The bills encourage expansion of the program beyond the poorest and neediest countries in Africa and the Caribbean to rich countries such as Russia, China and India, including countries that have their own nuclear programs and space exploration programs.
- **Mission creep:** The bills dilute the program with new requirements for a host of pet development causes, including food, water, treatment of other infectious diseases, gender empowerment programs, poverty alleviation programs, microcredit, schools and teachers, legal aid, agricultural assistance, government advocacy, biomedical research, and so on. These additions transform a targeted and accountable \$15 billion AIDS program into an unaccountable, unspecified \$50 billion development program.
- **Increased support for the UN** (and other multilateral organizations): The bills double the U.S. contribution to the UN-affiliated Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to \$2 billion a year, where the U.S. only has one vote despite contributing over a quarter of the budget. The Fund has serious policy problems, drug quality problems, administrative corruption, and operates programs not bound by U.S. laws on abortion, needle exchange, prostitution/trafficking policy, and others. The bills also

San Francisco

May 1900

My dear Mr. [illegible]

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Yours very truly
J. H. [illegible]

increase support for other U.N. entities promoting dubious health initiatives, such as the Roll Back Malaria partnership, and the World Health Organization.

- **Feckless or morally dubious activities:** The bills support or would allow morally questionable activities, including advocating with host governments to change gender norms and policies and promoting activities that could include needle distribution to drug users. What's more, the bill provides support for failing biomedical research programs that continually prove to actually *increase* the health risks of research subjects and have had to be stopped for ethical reasons, including failing HIV vaccine and microbicide research.

Congress recently raised the national debt limit to almost \$10 trillion. We are mortgaging our well-intentioned foreign assistance programs on the backs of our children and grandchildren. What's more, the PEPFAR program has been one of the few success stories of U.S. foreign assistance policy; simply put, the program isn't "broken." The best approach to reauthorization would be to simply extend current authorities at a fiscally responsible level. Barring that approach, we object to any motion to act on these bills in the Senate.

Thank you for protecting our rights on this legislation.

Sincerely

Tom U. Cohen Jim DeMint
Jeff Sessions Lyle Chalkin
Dino Vitter
Jim Bunning