

President Bush Signs Global AIDS Bill

On May 27, 2003, President Bush signed a Global HIV/AIDS bill (P.L. 108-25) which authorizes \$15 billion over five years to fight AIDS through both bilateral and multilateral measures and adds a key amendment to enhance debt relief. The bill answers the President's call for bold new advances in the fight against global AIDS in the 14 countries hardest hit by the epidemic, while expanding the U.S. commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, so long as the U.S. contribution leverages a proportional share from other donors. The bill also includes an amendment that would increase debt relief for qualified countries with special provisions for those countries battling HIV/AIDS.

The proposed scale-up of HIV/AIDS funding is intended to achieve the following results:

- Prevent 7 million new infections
- Provide care and support for 10 million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans
- Provide antiretroviral therapy for 2 million of those in need

What are the key aspects of the legislation?

The Global AIDS bill authorizes the expansion of U.S. efforts to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa, the Caribbean and other countries in the developing world by:

- Authorizing \$3 billion each year for 2004-08;
- Authorizing up to \$1 billion for the Global Fund, so long as the U.S. contribution does not exceed 33% of contributions, thereby providing incentives to leverage additional contributions from other donors;
- Supporting a balanced approach that target prevention, education, care, treatment and research and focuses on the preservation of the family so that fewer children will be orphaned by AIDS;
- Promotes the ABC approach for behavior change as an important component of prevention efforts (“Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condoms”);
- Endorses the work of non-governmental organizations (including faith-based and community-based organizations);
- Provides increased emphasis on mother-to-child transmission activities, as well as support for the routine voluntary counseling and testing of pregnant women and access to treatment by women and children; and
- Provides deeper debt relief for qualified countries so that a country's annual expenditure on debt would be reduced according to its revenue stream and reduced further if battling an HIV/AIDS epidemic.

How does the legislation parallel and enhance the President's vision?

- *Overall Funding Levels*—Both the Global AIDS bill and the President's proposal include a commitment of \$15 billion over the next five years for both bilateral programs and the Global Fund.
- *A Balanced Approach*—Both proposals embrace a balanced approach including prevention, care and the use of life saving antiretroviral treatments for those suffering from the HIV virus and also for use in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.
- *Bilateral Enhancements*—Both proposals offer significant increases in funding for bilateral initiatives through a new account to reside at the State Department that will fund

programs through various agencies. The Global AIDS bill also echoes the President's call for the appointment of a "Coordinator of the United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally." Such a person would be appointed by the President and would ensure cohesion and unity of efforts among the various agencies.

- *Global Fund Financial Commitments* – The Global AIDS bill adds language regarding the Global Fund that ensures that the U.S. will increase its commitments to the Fund but will only do so if other donors match U.S. pledges. "Up to \$1 billion" would be available to the Fund, which, combined with existing U.S. commitments, would be roughly 33% of the Fund's financing needs through FY2004. By mobilizing additional resources conditional upon proven successes of the Fund and other donors matching U.S. contributions, the U.S. can multiply its own efforts.
- *New Accountability and Transparency Language Regarding the Fund*—The Global AIDS bill includes language that would protect for accountability and transparency of the Fund. It creates an oversight "shadow agency" within the Executive Branch that will review all Global Fund applications in order to recommend coherence with U.S. policies and laws. The bill also requires continual monitoring and evaluation by the Comptroller General and requires a report every two years on the Fund noting whether objectives are being met by projects supported by the Fund.