

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to express deep concern about the impact of the foreign aid funding pause on global health programs, particularly the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). We urge that essential HIV and AIDS services continue uninterrupted; a halt in these services threatens millions of lives, undermines decades of progress, and diminishes U.S. leadership in global health security and diplomacy.

PEPFAR operates in 54 countries, primarily across Africa, delivering life-saving care to millions through a network of over 190,000 full-time clinical and support staff.¹ These health professionals, including 1,422 doctors, 13,577 nurses and nursing assistants, and more than 108,000 community health workers — earning an average of just over \$3,000 per year — provide essential HIV treatment, testing, and prevention services. Building and sustaining this public health infrastructure further supports pandemic preparedness against future emerging infectious diseases and other global health threats to U.S. security.

The scope of PEPFAR's impact is staggering: each day, over 222,000 people collect antiretroviral therapy to stay healthy; more than 90% of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) initiates globally; more than 224,000 HIV tests are conducted, diagnosing 4,374 new cases, including pregnant women in antenatal care; 17,695 orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV receive support; 7,163 cervical cancer screenings are performed, diagnosing and treating hundreds of women with pre-cancerous or cancerous conditions; and 3,618 women experiencing gender-based violence, including 779 cases of sexual violence, receive care and support.²

These are not just numbers. They represent real people whose lives are at risk from any pause or suspension in U.S. foreign assistance. Globally, HIV remains a crisis, with 1.3 million new infections annually — 3,500 every day. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 3,100 young women and girls aged 15 to 24 are newly infected with HIV every week.³

While we acknowledge that PEPFAR has received a limited waiver to restart critical HIV services, including antiretroviral treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmissions,

¹ The Andelson Office of Public Policy. *Impact of Stop Work Orders for PEPFAR Programs*. January 2025.

<https://www.amfar.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Impact-of-Stop-Work-Orders-for-PEPFAR-Programs-2.pdf>

² U.S. Department of State. *Results and Impact – PEPFAR*. 2024. <https://www.state.gov/results-and-impact-pepfar>

³ UNAIDS. *Global HIV Statistics, Fact Sheet 2024*. 2024.

https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/UNAIDS_FactSheet_en.pdf

other activities not explicitly mentioned in the PEPFAR waiver will remain suspended until further notice, including programs for prevention, key populations, adolescent girls and young women, and orphans and vulnerable children. Even short funding pauses jeopardize the ability of health workers and aid programs to provide services, with catastrophic consequences for those dependent on them.

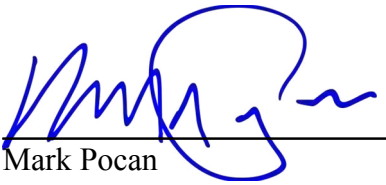
PEPFAR's success in preventing and treating HIV is not only essential to global health but also a key component of U.S. diplomatic "soft power" and a testament to America's forward thinking. Suspending these essential services creates openings for adversaries such as China and Russia to expand their influence in regions critical to U.S. strategic interests, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, potentially costing American jobs and diminishing our technological edge in healthcare innovations. This aid freeze endangers both health outcomes and our country's credibility as a global leader.

Given the severity of these concerns, we request your response to the following inquiries:

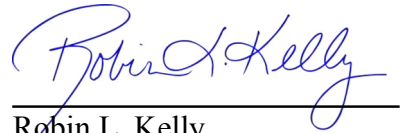
1. **Impact on Global Progress:** What assessments have been conducted on how the pause in foreign aid will affect PEPFAR's progress in preventing new HIV infections and expanding access to treatment and services for key populations?
2. **Service Continuity Plans:** What measures are being implemented to ensure that essential HIV services — including testing, prevention, treatment, and support for vulnerable populations — are maintained during the funding pause?
3. **Mitigation Strategies:** Given the recent limited guidance on implementing the PEPFAR waiver, will the Administration expand the waiver to include PEPFAR HIV prevention services and other PEPFAR programs essential to saving lives?
4. **Program Disruption Monitoring:** What steps are being taken to track the immediate and long-term impact of the aid pause on HIV service delivery and outcomes?
5. **Implications for Key Populations:** How will the aid pause impact the availability and effectiveness of HIV programming for key populations?

PEPFAR is a cornerstone of global health progress and U.S. diplomacy, with bipartisan support spanning decades. This highly successful and impactful bilateral aid program represents the monumental goodwill of the American people. We urge the Administration to take swift action to prevent disruptions in these essential services. PEPFAR is the single best example of U.S. foreign assistance that makes America safer, stronger and more prosperous. The lives of millions of people — and America's standing in the world — depend on it continuing.

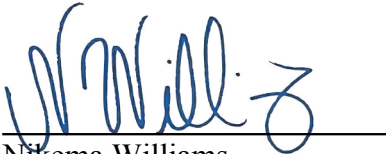
Sincerely,



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress




Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



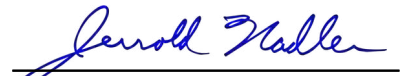
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



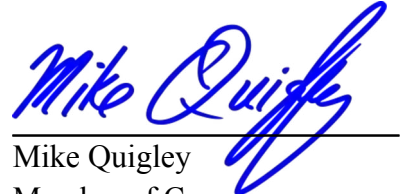
Maxine Waters
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Jerrold Nadler
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LaMonica McIver
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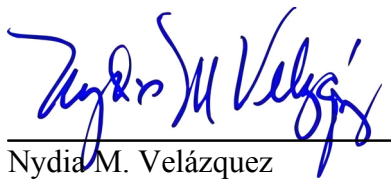
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



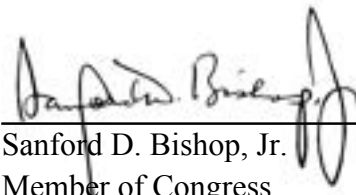
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



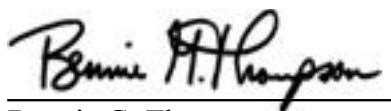
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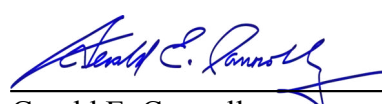
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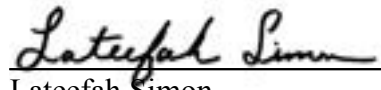
Mark Takano
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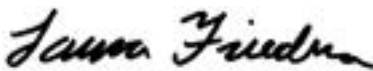
Pramila Jayapal
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Robert Garcia
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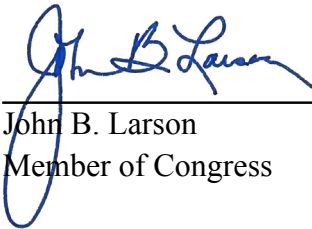
Lateefah Simon
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Laura Friedman
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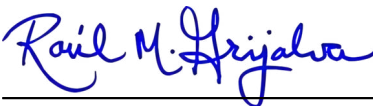
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



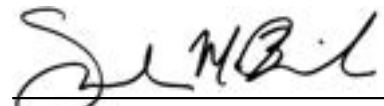
Andre Carson
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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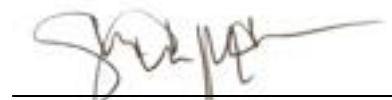
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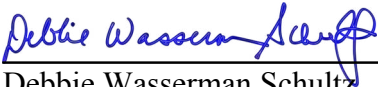
Seth Magaziner
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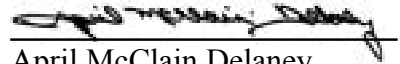
Valerie P. Foushee
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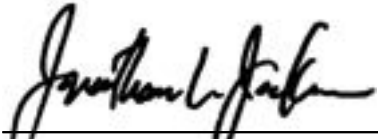
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Julie Johnson
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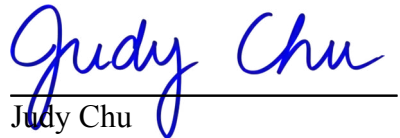
Gabe Amo
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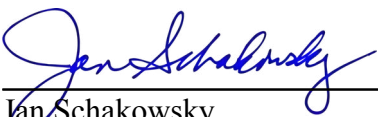
Sean Casten
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Ritchie Torres
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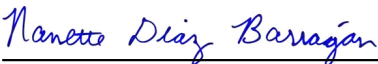
Judy Chu
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Danny K. Davis
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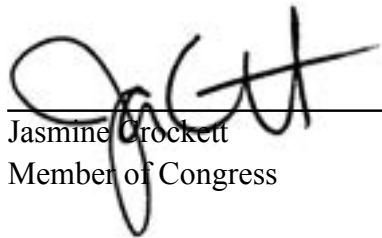
Ayanna Pressley
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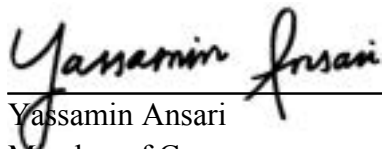
Al Green
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Jasmine Crockett
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Yassamin Ansari
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JM Tokuda
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/s/

Adriano Espaillat
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Marilyn Strickland
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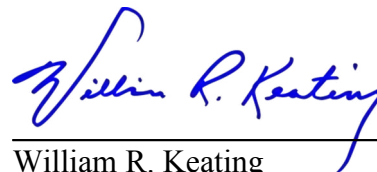
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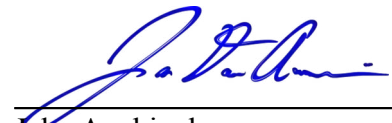
Sylvester Turner
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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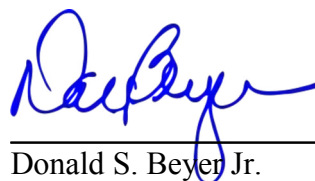
George Latimer
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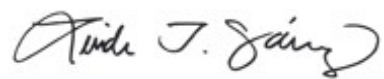
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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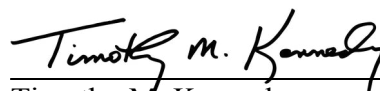
Mikie Sherrill
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Stephen F. Lynch
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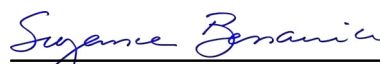
Linda T. Sánchez
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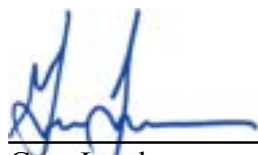
Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



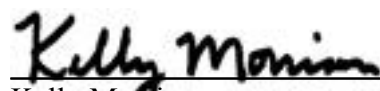
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



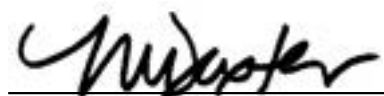
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



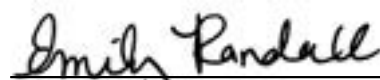
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



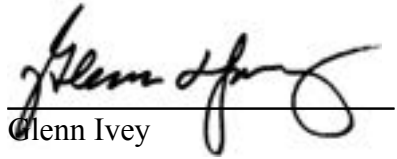
Maxine Dexter
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Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress