



A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



Take Action!

June 19, 2007

HELP FIGHT GLOBAL POVERTY: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO VOTE ON CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE BILL THIS WEEK

TAKE ACTION NOW! Visit the CRS Action Center – <http://actioncenter.crs.org> – now to contact your Representatives and urge them to support the following during consideration of the FY 2008 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill:

- Preserve the funding increases made to poverty-focused development assistance accounts, and oppose any amendment to divert or reduce funding for these accounts;
- Support the new focus on funding poverty reduction and long term development for Colombia;
- Support the Pitts Amendment to remove the provision added in Committee that cancels the current 7 per cent allocation (one third of HIV and AIDS prevention funds) for abstinence-until-marriage programs in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); and
- Urge reinstatement of the Mexico City Protocol so that U.S. assistance will not be channeled through organizations performing and promoting abortion as family planning.

WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: The House of Representatives is scheduled to consider the fiscal year 2008 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill this week. The bill includes critical funding for international assistance programs that provide lifesaving and life-changing services to the poorest people in our world such as emergency assistance, health, education, agriculture and small loan programs as well as treatment to people infected by HIV.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) welcome some new policy directions the House has included in the bill, including increased funding for those programs that address chronic poverty through long-term development and a shift towards greater humanitarian assistance for Colombia, a country wracked by war for more than forty years.

However, CRS and the USCCB have serious concerns about reversing an important provision in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the U.S. government program that provides anti-retroviral therapy to people affected by HIV in poor countries. Until recent Committee action made changes to PEPFAR, 7 percent of PEPFAR funding, or one third of all prevention funding available within PEPFAR, has been allocated for abstinence-until-marriage programs. These programs have proven to be very effective in Africa to change behavior and ultimately save lives. [Click here for a copy of the letter](#) USCCB and CRS sent to Representatives on this issue. USCCB and CRS are urging support for an amendment introduced by Rep. Pitts (PA-16th) that would reverse the changes made to PEPFAR.

USCCB and CRS are also very concerned that the current version of the bill also rescinds an important provision known as the "Mexico City Protocol" that prevents U.S. family planning assistance to be channeled through groups that perform and promote abortions as family planning.

WHY WE SHOULD GET INVOLVED: Catholic social teaching is rooted in the fundamental dignity of every human life. As Catholics, we are called to uphold human dignity and to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters worldwide who are suffering because of war, disease, natural disaster and poverty. In response to this call, CRS and the USCCB are promoting the [Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty](#) that seeks to address some of the root causes of global poverty, including aid, trade and debt. Please visit our website to join our Campaign today: www.usccb.org/globalpoverty.

For further information contact:

Tina Rodousakis, CRS Legislative Network Specialist, 1-800-235-2772 x 7462; troudousa@crs.org or
Fr. Andrew Small, USCCB Policy Advisor, International Economic Development, (202) 541-3153; asmall@usccb.org