



July 22, 2008

Dear Congressman,

On behalf of the National Hemophilia Foundation and the World Federation of Hemophilia, we would like to express our support for S. 2731, the Senate-passed version of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. Our organizations represent the 20,000 people in the US and more than 400,000 people worldwide affected by hemophilia. As a result of tainted blood and blood products, it is estimated that approximately 10% of the global hemophilia population today, as well as some individuals with von Willebrand Disease and other rare bleeding disorders have been infected with HIV. We strongly support this legislation.

The National Hemophilia Foundation (NHF) is the largest US organization advocating for the needs of individuals with bleeding and clotting disorders. The World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH), an international organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with hemophilia and related bleeding disorders, has member organizations in more than 100 countries including the US and official recognition from the World Health Organization.

Of particular importance to our community is the provision eliminating the ban on travel to the US for people who are affected by HIV, as well as the strong focus on the need to prevent HIV transmission through appropriate education and medical care.

Repealing the discriminatory HIV visa ban from our laws is a priority for our organizations. The long-standing and inexcusable existing policy has serious consequences for our community. International visitors living with chronic conditions including HIV and having a bleeding disorder should not be singled out in this way

For people with a bleeding disorder and HIV, the restrictions are particularly difficult because travelers who manage to obtain visas must bring an adequate supply of antiviral therapy and clotting factor, and have sufficient assets or insurance to cover any medical care that they may need while in the US. However, due to the high cost of this treatment, it is unlikely that any but the wealthiest people could attest that they could fully cover the cost if an accident or medical crisis were to occur while visiting the US, and travel insurance frequently excludes pre-existing conditions.

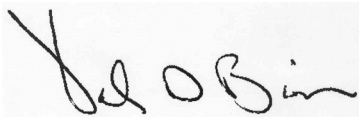
Moreover, the bleeding disorders community in the US is also negatively affected by the ban because it make it more difficult for patients and health care providers to collaborate, share knowledge, and learn about the latest research and treatment options

through participation in international conferences held here. It is time to eliminate this discriminatory practice and one of the last remaining stigmas of living with HIV/AIDS.

We also support amended language proposed by Senator Sessions, which strengthens educational programs aimed at limiting the spread of HIV and other infectious disease at overseas medical clinics. The language calls for clinics to take universal precautions in health care facilities, educate providers so they can recognize and avoid risks of HIV exposure during medical treatment, investigate suspected HIV infections originating in health care settings, and develop methods to identify and stop unexplained transmission of infectious diseases. Transmission of infectious disease during medical treatment is more common in some developing nations, where doctors and nurses may have limited understanding of the risks of spreading diseases such as HIV, and where clinics and hospitals may lack the formal safety precautions and guidelines that are required at medical facilities in the United States. We strongly support efforts to prevent people from being infected with HIV while receiving medical care.

For all of these reasons, we support the Senate-passed version of the PEPFAR reauthorization legislation. This legislation will positively impact the domestic and international bleeding disorders communities as well as people with HIV/AIDS throughout the world. We strongly urge you to support its passage.

Sincerely,



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