

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chair
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Graham, Ranking Member Schatz, Chair Capito, and Ranking Member Baldwin:

We write to express our strong concerns regarding recent developments with the U.S. Department of State's ("State") restructuring of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program.¹ While the U.S. has been a strong leader in global health for several decades, State's reform of PEPFAR will weaken the role of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in global health operations, which will cost lives and make our country less safe. Therefore, we urge the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee (SFOPS), as well as the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee (LHHS), to take steps to safeguard PEPFAR implementation in Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations bills.

No global health program better demonstrates the success of the U.S. global health strategy and the leadership of CDC than PEPFAR, which has saved over 26 million lives, prevented 7.8 million babies from being born with HIV/AIDS, and contributed to a 2.1% higher increase in GDP per capita in countries with PEPFAR funding since 2003.² For decades, CDC has played a pivotal role in implementing PEPFAR with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under State's coordination, leading global disease surveillance by maintaining more than 60 country offices, 1,500 overseas staff, and thousands of laboratory facilities worldwide.³

¹ *America First Global Health Strategy*, U.S. Department of State (Sep. 2025), <https://www.state.gov/america-first-global-health-strategy>.

² U.S. Department of State, *supra* note 1.

³ *The CDC-PEPFAR Funding Crisis: What Congress Must Know—and Can Do*, Partners in Health (May 26, 2026), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1frAcDE1NZnRXitqO1Cxyx44o7VxnWU1q/view>.

Despite the program's demonstrated success, the Trump Administration has undermined PEPFAR over the past year by dismantling USAID, gutting CDC staff, and withholding half of PEPFAR's funding for Fiscal Year 2025.⁴ With these actions, the Administration diminished the very same monitoring and lab capabilities that would have been instrumental in responding to current disease threats, like the hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks.

On May 5, 2026, State announced that long-standing interagency transfers of PEPFAR resources in most countries will end by September 30, 2026.⁵ Partner countries that decide to continue working with the CDC will have to purchase its services and expertise at set fees.⁶ Additionally, countries that receive more than \$125 million in annual U.S. foreign assistance will now be required to purchase a minimum package of these services.⁷ This policy will endanger PEPFAR's mission, weaken its effectiveness at combatting HIV/AIDS around the world, and undermine the strategic interests of the United States in public health.

Additionally, State is moving from PEPFAR's traditional model to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that requires countries to sign agreements with stipulations such as favorable access to critical mineral deals. According to State's 2022 PEPFAR Annual Report to Congress, the top five recipient countries scored an average Corruption Perception Index of 32.4.⁸ Only one of these countries is currently considered "Free."⁹ Implementing partners that receive government contracts to disperse foreign assistance funds are required to conduct regular monitoring and reporting to ensure the efficacy of these funds, which is often not the case for government-to-government models.¹⁰ The proposed PEPFAR changes will hamper the United States' ability to conduct oversight and weaken critical safeguards that ensure transparency.

As a result, we respectfully ask the Subcommittees to consider the following options as they develop the FY2027 appropriations bill:

- **Directly transfer \$2 billion allocated for PEPFAR from the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs account to the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies account, specifically to CDC.** Allocating the funds to CDC will continue the long-standing transfer that has occurred after the appropriations bill has passed and will preserve the CDC's global health expertise.
- **Directly increase funding for CDC's Global Health account, which would reduce CDC's reliance on future transfers from State, while continuing its efforts to support global health surveillance by maintaining relationships with foreign Ministers of Health.** CDC has a proven track record of success as an implementing partner in PEPFAR. Its expertise in HIV surveillance **and** lab quality is essential to

⁴ Stephanie Nolen, *Trump Budget Office Is Withholding H.I.V. Funds That Congress Appropriated*, New York Times (Aug. 21, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/21/health/hiv-aids-pepfar-funding-trump.html>.

⁵ Jon Cohen, *Trump Administration Cuts CDC's Key Role in Global Program to Stop HIV*, Science (May 8, 2026), <https://www.science.org/content/article/trump-administration-cuts-cdc-s-key-role-global-program-stop-hiv>.

⁶ Cohen, *supra* note 7.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, *supra* note 1.

⁸ *Corruption Perceptions Index*, Transparency.org (2025), <https://files.transparencycdn.org/images/CPI-2025-Report-EN.pdf>.

⁹ *Global Freedom Index*, Freedom House (2025), <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2026>.

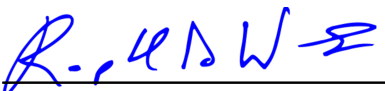
¹⁰ George Ingram, *What Is U.S. Foreign Assistance?*, Brookings Institute (September 12, 2024), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-is-us-foreign-assistance>.

support any testing, treatment, and prevention work in PEPFAR. Maintaining these specific capacities will protect U.S. government investment in the program. At the same time, increasing the CDC's Global Health appropriation in the LHHS bill will bolster its work to support other disease surveillance efforts built through PEPFAR.

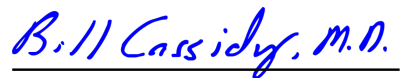
PEPFAR is the crown jewel of the U.S.'s public health legacy. While we must be conscientious stewards of taxpayer dollars spent on foreign assistance, PEPFAR is one of the most cost-effective foreign assistance programs, delivering an immense return on investment. Therefore, we urge you to include language in the FY2027 appropriations bill that preserves CDC's role as a core implementing partner of PEPFAR to signal that Congress remains committed to maintaining the United States' global health leadership and stability.

Thank you for your consideration.

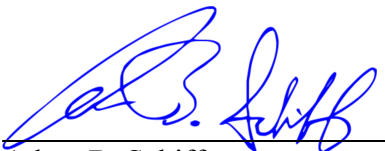
Sincerely,



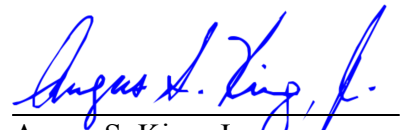
Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



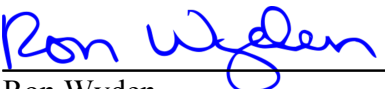
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
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Tina Smith
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



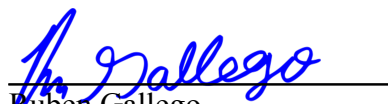
Martin Heinrich
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Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



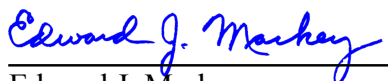
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



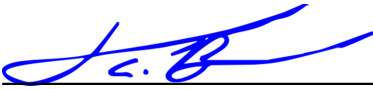
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



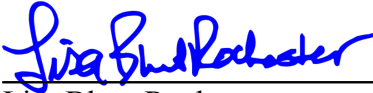
Amy Klobuchar
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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