

Action Alert: HIV Leaders to Meet at Capitol Hill to #SaveHIVFunding

Over 130 HIV groups decry proposals to slash HIV funding in the U.S. and abroad. Join their DC press conference on Tuesday, September 5.

September 1, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

HIV activists will convene at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday, September 5, for a press conference to #SaveHIVFunding and denounce proposed cuts to [HIV](#) budgets both nationally and abroad. Spearheaded by the HIV prevention advocacy group [PrEP4All](#), the 4 p.m. event will feature HIV leaders from numerous groups, including Southern AIDS Coalition, NMAC, Housing Works, AVAC, the U.S. People Living With HIV Caucus, the HIV Medicine Association, the Advocacy Network for Africa and Equity & Impact Solutions.

The press conference will take place as thousands of HIV advocates, researchers and allies gather in Washington, DC, September 5 to 9 for the [annual U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS](#).

In addition to planning the press conference to draw attention to HIV funding, over 130 executive directors of leading HIV organizations also [signed a letter to Congress](#). “We write to request your support in a time of unprecedented concern for our movement,” states the letter. “Specifically, we are asking you to do whatever you can to support the HIV funding levels and report language proposed by the Senate LHHS [Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies] appropriations subcommittee for FY24 and a clean, five-year [PEPFAR](#) reauthorization [referring to the global U.S. President’s Emergency AIDS Relief program].”

Fellow advocates and allies are invited to register and attend the press conference. The event will take place at the intersection of Constitution Avenue NW and First Street SE, at the northeast corner of the Capitol building grounds. For more details, go to [ActionNetwork.org](#).

This summer, a Republican subcommittee of the House of Representatives passed a spending bill that, if accepted by Congress and signed by the president, would gut \$767 million from HIV funding in the 2024 budget. The bill would slash funding for numerous HIV programs and eliminate the Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative passed by President Donald Trump in 2019. The initiative aims to lower new HIV rates by 75% by 2025 and by 90% by 2030, mostly by focusing on the 57 counties, states and cities that account for 50% of new HIV cases. To learn more about the

initiative, [read an overview at HIV.gov](#) and [visit the official web page at HRSA.org](#). For a related POZ article, see “[Plans to End the HIV Epidemic at Home and Abroad](#).”

Shortly after the House Appropriations subcommittee passed its bill, Senate appropriators put forth a spending bill that maintains funding for domestic HIV programs. Settling on the upcoming year’s budget requires back-and-forth negotiation between Democrats and Republicans, but HIV advocates are alarmed at the efforts to gut funding.

“Given that the House version of the bill includes sizeable funding cuts, program eliminations and divisive policy riders, we realize passage of [the Senate] spending bill is far from reality,” [said Carl Schmid](#), executive director of the HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute, when the bills were passed in July. “Republicans must come to the table and support bills, such as this one, that can pass the Congress and be signed by the president.”

Also this summer, [Republican anti-abortionists threatened to block funding](#) for PEPFAR, the global AIDS program launched in 2003 by President George W. Bush. PEPFAR is estimated to have saved 25 million lives so far.

“While advocates have been successful in shoring up bipartisan support in the Senate to oppose domestic cuts, it is vital that we continue to unite and insist that any proposal to slash global or domestic HIV funding is categorically unacceptable,” said PrEP4All of the need for the press conference at the Capitol.