



# *Congressman Donald Payne*

## Tenth District - New Jersey

For Immediate Release  
May 30, 2007

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### Payne Applauds Administration on Increased Funding for PEPFAR

Congressman Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, praised the Bush Administration's announcement of increasing funding for the President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to \$30 billion. Payne, who on World's AIDS Day 2006 called on the Administration to double their initial financial commitment of \$15 billion, considers this announcement a positive advancement towards PEPFAR's reauthorization.

Launched in 2003, PEPFAR is a multi-billion dollar initiative aimed at drastically reducing HIV/AIDS infections and the adverse affects of the disease in 15 focus countries, twelve of which are on the African continent. Set to be reauthorized in 2008, PEPFAR has achieved many successes. According to the US Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, over 800,000 people are currently receiving anti-retroviral medications. Through PEPFAR, nearly 50,000 people living with AIDS start life-saving therapies every month. With this new infusion of resources, the Bush Administration hopes to expand treatment to 2.5 million people.

Payne presided as Chair over the House Foreign Affairs Committee's hearing on PEPFAR's reauthorization on April 24, 2007. During the hearing, Payne stated, "I have always said that we must make the issue of global health local. The ability to take care of oneself and your family is not an exclusive human right determined by one's geography. As the United States, we have the moral responsibility to assist developing nations as they tackle the AIDS epidemic. It is evident to me that if we are to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, we are going to have to redouble our efforts to find and implement effective programs, and to significantly increase the resources we are providing."

While the increased funding is a welcomed sign from the Administration, much more needs to be done. An injection of financial resources, without proper direction, can dampen potential new victories. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Payne will continue to raise his concerns about PEPFAR's operations as Congress debates its reauthorization, "We must give health care workers on the ground the ability to tailor their plans according to the culture and conditions in which they work. It is vital that we address countries' failing health infrastructure which must include focusing on health worker shortages and working to improve their water and sanitation issues. Also, we must further collaborate with world food organizations that help to provide the nourishment needed to take anti-retroviral medications. In order for PEPFAR to reach its maximum potential, we need to take the lessons learned over the past 4 years and improve upon this initiative."

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