Dear Colleague:

I urge you to join me in requesting robust funding for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The U.S.’s bipartisan commitment to PEPFAR and the Global Fund not only saves lives, but also contributes directly to stability, security and economic growth worldwide. Thanks to PEPFAR, 9.5 million people around the world are receiving life-saving antiretroviral treatment. And through its combined efforts, the Global Fund is on track to have saved 22 million lives by the end of 2016. Our strong support for PEPFAR and the Global Fund, coupled with scientific advances and lessons learned from a decade of implementation, has the potential to turn the tide on HIV/AIDS and help us meet our target of achieving an AIDS-free generation by 2030.

These contributions are just a fraction of 1% of the federal budget, yet enable PEPFAR and the Global Fund to continue its critical, life-saving work and influence the organization’s ability to leverage additional resources from other donors, and low- and middle-income countries that now account for the majority of global HIV funding. Strong support for both PEPFAR and the Global Fund enhance U.S. leadership in the world and increase our ability to meet seminal global health goals that are within reach.

For further information or to co-sign, please contact M.A. Keifer in my office at 5-2404 or M.A.Keifer@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress
March __, 2016

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee for State and Foreign Operations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee for State and Foreign Operations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

We write to thank you for your continued commitment to global health, to investments in the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Our strong support for PEPFAR and the Global Fund, coupled with scientific advances and lessons learned from implementation, has the potential to turn the tide on HIV/AIDS and help us meet our target of achieving an AIDS-free generation. As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we encourage you to allocate $1.35 billion for the Global Fund and $4.845 billion for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), funding that is urgently needed to fully capitalize on our prior investments and continue the fight against this terrible disease. We also ask that you support funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Global AIDS Programs at $128 million and $350 million for the USAID HIV/AIDS program.

Globally, our support through PEPFAR and the Global Fund is dramatically reducing the burden of HIV/AIDS in developing countries. As of September 30, 2015, PEPFAR supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for 9.5 million men, women, and children – a more than four-fold increase just since the beginning of President Obama’s administration. To prevent infection in young men, PEPFAR has supported more than 8.9 million voluntary medical male circumcisions in Eastern and Southern Africa to reduce the risk of HIV transmission. In FY 2015 alone, to prevent infection in babies, PEPFAR supported HIV testing services (HTS) for more than 14.7 million pregnant women. This enabled 831,500 of the women who tested positive to get antiretroviral medications for their own health, and ensure their babies are born HIV-free. To date, PEPFAR has trained more than 190,000 health care workers to deliver HIV and other health services. These efforts not only improve HIV care, but also enable countries to improve the overall health of their citizens by creating a lasting infrastructure that positions partner countries to respond to a range of health challenges and threats.

Investments in PEPFAR and the Global Fund are needed now more than ever. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), nearly 37 million people are living with HIV/AIDS globally. Although the current estimate of individuals on treatment for HIV (15.8 million) has doubled within the last five years—there is still more to do. With “business as usual,” we risk a cumulative 100 million HIV infections by 2030, which is far beyond the global community’s ability to respond. Every week, nearly 40,000 people are infected with HIV globally. While HIV incidence has declined by 50 percent since its peak in sub-Saharan Africa, the population has increased by 340 million during the same period. And each day, more than 2400 young people aged 15-24 become infected with HIV. Given these demographic trends, we need to keep ahead of the epidemic.

That is why we urge you to maintain funding sufficient to sustain PEPFAR’s pace of scale-up for core treatment and prevention intervention. This funding will also be critical to increasing the geographic reach of PEPFAR’s Accelerating Children’s Treatment initiative and the DREAMS program, an ambitious partnership to reduce HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women in 10 sub-Saharan African countries.
Achieving epidemic control and, ultimately, an AIDS-free generation requires all partners, working in a focused, coordinated, and data-driven manner to succeed. That is why PEPFAR has prioritized key collaborations with multilateral organizations, including UNAIDS and the Global Fund. The Global Fund is better positioned than ever to help accelerate progress on HIV/AIDS, as well as contain tuberculosis and malaria. Global Fund investments, including through work with its partners, have produced remarkable results. As of December 2015, Global Fund-financed programs have supported treatment for 8.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS, detected and treated 13.2 million cases of tuberculosis; and distributed 548 million insecticide treated nets for the prevention of malaria.

For every $1 invested by the United States, the Global Fund leverages $2 from other donors-- a good return on investment that ensures that the response to fighting AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria is shared between more partners. And while the U.S. has historically been the largest donor, the pooling of resources from the global community ensures the burden of the response to the three diseases does not rest solely on American taxpayers. If the U.S. pulls back at this critical moment, not only do we risk rolling back the successes achieved to date, but it will send a signal to other countries that it is acceptable for them to retreat from funding as well.

PEPFAR and the Global Fund have begun to turn the corner on one of the gravest epidemics in history, and the United States’ globally recognized leadership in this area is something that every American can be proud of. Experts thought that the UN High-Level meeting’s 2011 commitment to reach 15 million people with treatment by 2015 was impossible, but U.S. leadership ensured that this target was met, and nine months ahead of schedule. In September 2015, the world adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and the global community collectively committed to a goal of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030. By the end of 2017, PEPFAR will support 12.9 million men, women, and children with life-saving treatment, provide 13 million voluntary medical male circumcisions, and reduce HIV incidence by 40 percent among adolescent girls and young women within the highest burden geographic areas of ten sub-Saharan African countries. We can’t turn back now.

The U.S.’s strong bipartisan commitment to PEPFAR and the Global Fund not only saves lives, but also contributes directly to stability, security and economic growth worldwide and boosts America’s image abroad. Restoring funds previously cut from PEPFAR and sustaining support for the Global Fund will enhance and maintain U.S. leadership in the world and increase our ability to strengthen health systems that protect against virulent disease outbreaks such as Ebola and other deadly infectious diseases, while making progress in combating tuberculosis and malaria.

Thank you for considering our request and for your ongoing leadership in fighting HIV/AIDS at home and around the world.

Sincerely,