

September 19, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Pro-Life Organizations Position on PEPFAR Reauthorization

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Minority Leader McConnell:

As you know, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is one of the most successful humanitarian health initiatives in U.S. history, investing over \$100 billion in the global HIV/AIDS response and credited with saving over 25 million lives in Africa. As organizations devoted to protecting human life, especially the lives of mothers and children, we want to see it continued.

However, it has become clear recently that the Biden Administration has hijacked PEPFAR's salutary purposes to promote abortion in African countries. Under the guise of "[Reimagining PEPFAR](#)," President Biden's State Department is partnering with abortion-promoting NGOs to integrate abortion into global health programs – in spite of the fact that there is no constitutional or statutory "right to abortion" in U.S. law, and in fact, nearly half of all American States outlaw elective abortion from early stages of gestation. Over 25 in-country recipients of PEPFAR funding are committed to performing and promoting abortion, and the Biden Administration has expressed its intention to deepen its ties to such organizations under the rubric of promoting "reproductive health" through PEPFAR contracts. This funding is being used to erase current life-affirming laws and replacing them with abortion permissive laws and policies in African nations, where the cultural and religious views of these countries' populations make them overwhelmingly committed to protecting life.

PEPFAR doesn't deserve to be politicized. This reeks of cultural imperialism and neocolonialism. Our position is confirmed by a recent [letter](#) signed by 129 African leaders from 15 countries. They express gratitude to the American people for 20 years of financial assistance to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic and applaud the "original strategy" that respected "values and focused PEPFAR on protecting and preserving life." However, they are increasingly alarmed about how the abortion issue has become integrated into the HIV-AIDS crisis.

Currently, the use of U.S. taxpayer funds in overseas programs is subject to conscientious restrictions such as the Helms and Siljander amendments, which preclude the use of such monies to perform, promote or support abortion on demand. But the Biden Administration and its PEPFAR funding partners are being disingenuous; enjoying the largesse of U.S. funding allows them to use their own monies to promote abortion, as

money is completely fungible. Thus, a commitment not to use PEPFAR funds for the performance or promotion of abortion is not enough. The next multi-year reauthorization of PEPFAR must implement life-protecting policies in the form of permanent legislative provisions that will ensure that NGOs that perform, promote or support abortion are not eligible for PEPFAR funds.

For these reasons, we are opposed to any multi-year reauthorization of PEPFAR that does not incorporate these protections for life. We are committed to preserving the authorities that are set to expire this year, especially the requirement that 10% of funds be expended for programs targeting orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS. We support the appropriations approach as included in the Fiscal Year 2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Appropriations bill currently being considered in the House.

PEPFAR is a crucial, life-saving program in its own right, but the excellence of its moral purposes should call each Member of Congress to more strongly protect it from political corruption, not look the other way. Congress needs to reassess the laudatory purposes of PEPFAR and the importance of respecting the conscientious beliefs of our African partners. This should be a continuing conversation in the halls of Congress, not whispered permission to allow the Biden Administration to continue to undermine the value of human life in the guise of saving it. The politicization of PEPFAR jeopardizes America's promise to end the HIV/AIDS pandemic by 2030. We call on Congress to protect this program and make sure funding goes to ending HIV/AIDS, not promoting abortion.

Sincerely,

AMERICANS UNITED FOR LIFE

ADVANCING AMERICAN FREEDOM

CATHOLIC VOTE

FAMILY POLICY ALLIANCE

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

HERITAGE ACTION FOR AMERICA

THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

MARCH FOR LIFE

MARCH FOR LIFE ACTION

NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE

SUSAN B. ANTHONY PRO-LIFE AMERICA

STUDENTS FOR LIFE OF AMERICA

cc: Republican Senators
Republican Members of Congress