



September 14, 2006

Senator Michael B. Enzi
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2109 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators and Congressmen:

As a coalition of groups dedicated to the reauthorization and modernization of the Ryan White CARE Act, we wish to commend the Enzi-Kennedy-Barton-Dingell bill that will finally direct much-needed resources to communities battling the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The primary goal of the Ryan White reauthorization has always been to ensure we are helping every American with HIV/AIDS who needs it and to ensure equal access to treatment and services for those affected by the disease, regardless of who they are or where they live. The Enzi-Kennedy-Barton-Dingell bill is a big step forward in ensuring that HIV/AIDS funding is equitable and available to keep pace with the epidemic for the next five years.

We applaud the tireless work of Congressional leaders in the Senate and House of Representatives. The Enzi-Kennedy-Barton-Dingell bill reflects months of hard work among Democrats and Republicans in Congress and years of hard work among community organizations across the country. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is expanding in America, and it is essential that the CARE Act keep pace with the epidemic. We believe that the Enzi-Kennedy-Barton-Dingell bill accurately prepares our communities to effectively battle HIV/AIDS disease now and in the future. The bill provides sensible guidelines for the use of Ryan White funds, placing a priority on life-sustaining medical care and treatment.

This Enzi-Kennedy-Barton-Dingell bill recognizes the HIV/AIDS crisis of today and directs federal aid where it is needed most. Moreover, for the first time, the CARE Act will include a provision dedicated to preventing the spread of the disease. We applaud Senators Enzi and Kennedy and Representatives Barton and Dingell for their tireless efforts on behalf of a compromise that addresses the needs of all Americans, and we call on the House and Senate to act promptly to finish the job and to approve the compromise bill.

For individuals with HIV and AIDS, this bipartisan bill will be the difference between life and death. We wish to commend Congressional leaders who have provided a bill that will open the door for many disadvantaged HIV/AIDS patients across the country to effectively cope with the disease in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Gary Puckrein
Executive Director
National Minority Health Month
Foundation

Harry Alford
President and CEO
National Black Chamber of Commerce

Phyllis Berry Myers
President
New Black Leadership Coalition

Vivian Berryhill
President and Founder
National Coalition of Pastors Spouses

Brent A. Wilkes
National Executive Director
League of United Latin American
Citizens (LULAC)

Roberto G. Posada
President
The Latino Coalition

Reverend Shelley M. Henderson
President and Founder
The First Ladies Summit

Charlie Grant
Founder
AbsoluteCare Medical Center

Elaine M. Cottle
Executive Director
AIDS Alabama, Inc.

AIDS Action Coalition
Huntsville, Alabama

David Little
Executive Director
South Alabama Cares

Laurie Dill, MD
Acting Medical Director
Montgomery AIDS Outreach

Marilyn Swyers
Manager
AIDS Outreach of East Alabama
Medical Center

Sharon Shaw
Department of Physical Therapy
UAB – University of Alabama
Birmingham

Kathy Gaddis
1917 Clinic – UAB

William Fulton
Director
Brother 2 Brother

Melvin R. Muhammad
Director
Am I My Brother's Keeper, Inc.

Dr. Kent Stock
Lowcountry Infectious Diseases

Representative Linda Upmeyer
Iowa State Representative (District 12)

Karen Musgrave
Birmingham AIDS Outreach

Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort
Worth

Vince Gillon
Executive Director
Carepoint Adult, Child and Family
Association

Harold Lawary
Program Director
Harabee Empowerment Center