

Media Advisory

People with HIV/AIDS Will Not Be Pushed Over The Cliff: Hundreds March on Offices of Congress in DC to Tell the Occupants to Move Forward in the Fight Against AIDS

Marchers Demand Robin Hood Tax to Generate Revenue, Instead of Killer Cuts
Dramatic pre-World AIDS Day Actions Planned to Show Backwards Effect of Slashing

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Start Time: Tuesday, November 27th, 12 PM

Location: Democratic National Committee, 430 S Capitol St SE, Washington, D.C.

Washington, DC: A few days before World AIDS Day, hundreds of people living with HIV and other AIDS activists will march to the offices of Congressional leaders to fight large cuts to AIDS treatment, prevention, and services.

The activists will gather outside the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee before marching to nearby Congressional office buildings of the leaders who are negotiating the budget crisis. The activists demand **no cuts** to the Ryan White Care Act, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security.

"We are literally marching for our lives," said Johnny Guaylupo, who is living with HIV. "If these cuts go through, more than 350,000 people will be denied AIDS treatment across the world – halting our progress to save more lives – *and more than 62,000 who would have otherwise survived will be dead of AIDS.* That is what it means to be pushed off this cliff."

"The so-called fiscal cliff will reverse the progress that we have made in the fight against AIDS, just when we have gotten ahead of the epidemic. We invite the members of Congress to join us outside, marching forward if they resist cuts, or backwards if they buy the lie that killer cuts will somehow solve fiscal problems while the corpses pile up," said Michael Tikili, a member of QUEEROCRACY.

The activists cite new research that shows that the AIDS pandemic could be ended in the next 30 years by continuing existing HIV prevention efforts, providing housing and supportive services, and getting about 18 million people on treatment by 2015.

However, if budget cuts are implemented at projected levels in the first year of sequestration, global health programs will lose \$689 million, while domestic AIDS

programs will lose \$538 million. UNAIDS reports that we need about \$8 billion by 2015 to stay on track towards an AIDS free generation.

According to Jose deMarco from ACT UP Philadelphia, “we know we can save the lives of people living with HIV in the United States and around the world through a tiny tax on Wall Street. This Robin Hood Tax could generate up to \$350 billion per year, which is more than is needed to bring an end to the AIDS pandemic.”

Secretary Hillary Clinton is expected to release a “Blueprint to End AIDS” right before World AIDS Day on December 1st. The blueprint comes after Secretary Clinton’s call for an AIDS-Free Generation a year ago.

However, medical student Braveen Ragunathan pointed out that “the government will not achieve an AIDS-free generation when they are simultaneously cutting the funding to the life-saving programs that will allow that vision to become a reality.”

“When you know that you can end the AIDS pandemic in the next 30 years, how can you not do everything possible to make sure that happens? As young people and students, we are going to do everything we can to make sure Obama and Congressional leaders protect AIDS funding and pass a Robin Hood Tax to end AIDS.” said Amirah Sequeira, National Coordinator of the Student Global AIDS Campaign.

The protest coincides with other actions taking place throughout DC during the week prior to World AIDS Day. “Cutting funds to housing, Medicaid and other safety net programs that actually work is not forward thinking” said Jaron Benjamin from VOCAL-NY, “and we will be back in DC to expose the truth to Congress.”

The protest is coordinated by ACT UP NY, ACT UP Philadelphia, American Medical Student Association, Health GAP, HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA), Housing Works, Student Global AIDS Campaign, QUEEROCRACY, VOCAL-NY