

Protection Against Transmission of HIV for Women and Youth Act of 2007 PATHWAY Act: H.R. 1713

Advocacy Resource
March 2007

What is the PATHWAY Act?

Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Chris Shays (R-CT) introduced the PATHWAY Act of 2007 on March 27. (The PATHWAY Act was originally introduced in 2006 and gathered 86 co-sponsors before the end of 2006.)

The PATHWAY Act:

- Removes the requirement that at least 1/3 of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) prevention money be spent on abstinence-until-marriage programs.
- Requires the President to develop a comprehensive and integrated HIV prevention strategy to address the vulnerabilities of women and girls.
- Increases access to male and female condoms.
- Integrates HIV prevention with reproductive health and other basic health care services.

Abstinence-Until-Marriage Programs Fail Women and Youth

Abstinence-until-marriage programs do not address the realities of the populations they target.

- In 2006, there were 4.3 million new HIV infections.
- 80% of HIV infections among women in Africa result from sex with their husbands or their primary partners.
- 40% of all new HIV infections worldwide are among youth aged 15-24, a clear indication that young people are already sexually active. Prevention programs need to be comprehensive for individuals. Segregating "abstain" or "be faithful" messages from messages about condoms and negotiating safer sex leaves people vulnerable.
- Violence against women and girls must be addressed as part of a comprehensive prevention intervention.

The GAO Report on the Abstinence Earmark

The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a review between February 2005 and February 2006 of prevention programs funded under PEPFAR. Key findings of the report, [Spending Requirement Presents Challenges for Allocating Prevention Funding under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#) (April 2006) include:

- Abstinence-until-marriage requirements "undermine" integration of ABC programs.
- Meeting abstinence-until-marriage requirements predetermines what prevention activities can be undertaken and impacts country teams' ability to "respond to local prevention needs."
- Some countries receive an exemption for the earmark but nonexempted countries suffer because they have to make up for the exemptions.
- OGAC (the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator) applies the earmark more broadly than required by law.

☪ ☪ 17 of 20 PEPFAR teams . . . reported that the spending requirement presents challenges to their ability to respond to local epidemiology and cultural and social norms. -GAO Report ☪ ☪

Take Action on the PATHWAY Act

Email and call your representative and ask him/her to co-sponsor the PATHWAY Act.

Write a letter to the editor asking your representative to co-sponsor the PATHWAY Act.

Mobilize others in your community to take action on the PATHWAY Act.

Contact: Healy Thompson (htompson@genderhealth.org or 301-270-1182) for more information

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