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Dear Colleague,

It would be better if President Bush had never proposed PEPFAR, than to have the better part of 15 billion dollars hijacked by abortion-promoting, chastity-mocking, anti-people groups like IPPF, UNFPA, and the Chinese government. If the amendments promoted by the pro-aborts are passed, a veto will be the President’s only option.

Steven W. Mosher

PEPFAR (Read: Pro-Aborts Emergency Plan For Abstinence Reduction)

Of course, that’s not what PEPFAR really stands for. What it really stands for is the “President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.” But if pro-abortion members of the House of Representatives have their way, HIV/AIDS prevention programs will no longer emphasize abstinence and marital fidelity, but rather pornographic sex education, condom distribution schemes, and population control, with maybe a little sex trafficking and prostitution thrown in for good measure.

The problem is this: Rep. Tom Lantos, the recently deceased Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, last month submitted a draft bill to the Committee which fundamentally changes the character of PEPFAR.

The first thing that the Lantos draft does is require the “integration” of ?family planning?
programs with HIV/AIDs prevention and treatment programs. This would force all groups currently providing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment to either perform sterilizations and dispense abortifacient contraceptives and condoms themselves, or to refer patients to onsite groups that do. Catholics and most other Christian groups, who provide up to 70 percent of the health care available in some poor countries, would not in good conscience be able to accept funding under this requirement.

Abortion-promoting population control groups, on the other hand, would be happy to “integrate” HIV/AIDS prevention services into their existing family-planning services. The result would be to channel most of the HIV/AIDS funding—billions of dollars in all—to groups that perform, promote, and lobby for the legalization of abortion. In other words, the $430 million that the U.S. provides for international family planning would be supplemented by billions more. Worse yet, abortion-minded groups which cannot currently obtain U.S. funding for family planning because of the Mexico City policy would be able to do so through PEPFAR. The IPPF would laugh all the way to the bank.

The Lantos draft also deep-sixes the requirement that 33 percent of all PEPFAR funds go toward prevention methods which focus on abstinence and marital fidelity, with condoms reserved for high-risk groups like prostitutes. Without this requirement, the only effective strategy for fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS, namely abstinence, will receive little to no emphasis in PEPFAR, and become a dead letter.

The Lantos draft deletes another valuable provision as well. Gone is the Prostitution Pledge, which requires AIDS relief groups who are looking to receive U.S. tax money to have a policy explicitly opposing prostitution or sex trafficking. You heard me correctly. Under the new draft, groups whose support for prostitution helps to spread the AIDS virus will receive money to help prevent its spread. Why should groups that support sex trafficking of women and children receive one cent of taxpayer money?

The current draft still includes a “conscience clause,” which is supposed to ensure that faith-based groups are not denied funding because they object to performing or referring for sterilizations and contraception. But without the abstinence set-aside, the conscience clause is irrelevant. These groups can expect to receive little or no funding.

Finally, the draft doubles the amount of money going to the Swiss-based Global Fund for AIDS from $1 billion to $2 billion a year. But although the U.S. provides about 1/3 of the
funding for the Global Fund, we have little idea where the money is going. Some of the money, we now know, is going to China, and to some of the same groups that are involved in China’s infamous one-child policy. In my view, this organization has disqualified itself from receiving any U.S. funding, much less a billion-dollar increase.

Pro-lifers in Congress are working hard to keep the existing PEPFAR programs in place. While the current program has not been an unqualified success, it has provided effective treatment programs and abstinence-based prevention programs to millions of Africans. Now there are those who want to turn it into just another cash cow for the abortion/population control industry.

Given pro-abortion majorities in the House and Senate, the President needs to publicly express opposition to the new draft as soon as possible. Any PEPFAR bill that undermines existing pro-life and pro-family policies, he should say, should be vetoed.

If the pro-aborts force us to choose between giving billions of tax dollars to abortion-minded groups, or ending the PEPFAR program altogether, our choice is simple: No bill is better than a bad bill.

*Colin Mason is the Director for Media Production at PRI.*