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**The U.S. Congress and the Global AIDS Epidemic Special
Session
Kaiser Family Foundation
July 25, 2012**

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SEN. BILL FRIST: -had the opportunity of leading that body during the four years including and after passage of the unprecedented and remarkable passage PEPFAR because of Bush's emergency plan. I was involved also--the thing that's important that we move forward to understand the nature of the United States Congress, which is involved in the legislation over a period of about eight years with others that led up to this unexpected announcement of the United States leadership in a bipartisan way under this new thing, this new moniker of PEPFAR.

Not really a politician and I am a physician and have been for the last 20 years, I spent a little bit of time going to Bangladesh and throughout Africa and Haiti and Russia. A large part focused on this little cagey virus. From a medical standpoint, it's moving a thousand times faster than most any other virus, HIV.

Today's panel, I think it's been a remarkable last three days, represents one of the most important conversations that we can have and that is understanding the role of the United States Congress, the United States co-equal branch of government. What the president says or does not say is totally dependent on this legislative branch, the Congress, the House of Representatives and the United States Senate and active legislation. Spelling out the legislation and ultimately

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funding the legislation itself. That is the role of the United States Congress in a co-equal branch of government.

Today's session is about the role, the importance of this congressional engagement on global AIDS, looking to the past, celebrating the past, which has been very much of what this conference is all about but also looking to the future. Indeed one of the most striking things about PEPFAR in the U.S. global AIDS response is the congressional support, as you'll see today in a bipartisan way that helped lay the groundwork for the creation of PEPFAR.

[Protestors chanting] Now just nine years ago—
[protestors chanting]—its renewal and [protestors chanting]—
years later protestors chanting] We have about 45 minutes to—
[protestors chanting]—I'll allow this for about one more
minute. [Protestors chanting] Thank you. [protestors chanting]

Thank you very much but I must ask you to please be quiet. [protestors chanting] I would ask [protestors chanting] please move to the side. Please move to the side so that we can continue.

I very much respect exactly what you have said. If you could move to the side so that the audience can participate and listen to this panel, we would very much appreciate it. We understand exactly that point that you've made, if you could move to the side, we would appreciate it. That's fine, if you just sit there that'd be good. [applause] Thank you. Thank

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you very much. [Protestors chanting] You know although we now celebrate in 2003 United States commitment is typically regarded as the [protestors chanting] in white at the global fight from United States Congress. [Protestors chanting] Today we have with us—

FEMALE SPEAKER: You can have the floor senator.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you. I'm used to this being a majority leader. I'm used to anything.

What we have with us today is a bipartisan group. We have two veterans or people who I consider veterans, who were present at the time that PEPFAR was initially passed and the reauthorization. Then two new members to reflect on the past but I think more important is that where do we go? What information do we have that we can act on and how can we act in an innovative way?

Today we have with us Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, Senator Mike Enzi of Wyoming, Congresswoman Barbara Lee of California and Senator Marco Rubio from Florida [applause]. In the interest of time, I will forgo the formal introductions so we can really jump right in with what will be a fantastic conversation.

I'll start with our veterans, Congresswoman Lee and Senator Enzi. Let me start with Congresswoman Lee. You have made HIV a key priority every day we've known each other for the last 12, 13 years. As soon as you came in 1998, in 1999.

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In fact in January of 2001, you wrote a wonderful letter that I have here but I won't read and I'd love for you to comment on it; to President George W. Bush, just a few days, two or three days after he took office, about the importance of addressing this issue. This issue of AIDS in Africa. Talk a little bit about that in that weather and also comment—reflect a little bit on where we've been and where we will be building.

REP. BARBARA LEE (D-CA): Thank you very much Senator.

SEN. BILL FRIST: It'll come down. It should—

REP. BARBARA LEE (D-CA): Just thank you for your continued leadership and your work on behalf of so many millions of people throughout the world. Also thank all of our panelists for continuing to try to make this a bipartisan effort because it has been in the past bipartisan. I just have to say upfront that in order to get to an AIDS free generation, yes we need, personally I believe to make sure users and sex workers represent the majority of people living with HIV.

That we need to really begin to meaningfully include all populations in our response. I just have to put a pitch in for my current bill because I may have to go vote [applause] which is HR6138 which would do everything; repeal the anti-prostitution pledge and all that. I just say that starting out because unfortunately I may have to run out for votes.

I think, where we go from here, we have to take the next steps. Early on when I was elected in Congress and thank

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you Senator for giving us the opportunity to be here today. I knew that we had to take this on in a big way. It was too quiet on Capitol Hill.

My predecessor, a great warrior, Congressman Ron Dellums, really helped inspire the concept of the notion of an AIDS marshall plan for Africa. During that period, I was on the Banking Committee with a Republican chair, Chairman Jim Leach. We worked together to put legislation that really laid the groundwork for the Global Fund. President Bill Clinton signed that into law which was the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000. Once again, it was a bipartisan effort. It never would have happened without yourself and Republicans in the House and the Senate.

When President Bush was elected, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I'll never forget this, we went over and we meet with every President, Republican or Democrat. The Congressional Black Caucus under the leadership of then Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, who is from Texas, went to the White House and we met with President Bush. HIV and AIDS were at the top of our agenda.

We had a variety of issues but I was tasked with the responsibility to move forward and talk about why we needed a global response. What was taking place in the world, especially in Africa? President Bush got it right away and we began to work together, again with the development of the

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legislation which became known as PEPFAR, which quite frankly has saved millions of lives.

During the legislative process we then—I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee then and it was Chairman Henry Hyde, Republican from Illinois. We had a ranking member, Tom Lantos, a Democrat from California. Of course, the great Donald Payne from New Jersey was the ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee.

All three, unfortunately, of these tireless, bold leaders have passed away. It's in their spirit that we have to continue to inspire this bipartisanship and continue to work together so that we can truly achieve an AIDS free generation. No one said it's going to be easy, it hasn't been easy.

I just want to thank Congressman—my colleague from Rhode Island is David still here? Cicilline? I want to just thank David for also, in the House, really helping us keep this together. I'll talk later, if I have the moment, about our next steps in terms of the Global HIV/AIDS Caucus.

I just have to say that it's important for all of you to understand that while we're in this very difficult period now of a lot of partisanship in terms of what you hear coming out, the noise on Capitol Hill. We have to keep our eyes on the prize.

We have to make sure that we move forward towards an AIDS free generation and figure out how to work together in a

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bipartisan way. It happened in the past with these senators and with my colleagues who are Republicans and Democrats, with the Congressional Black Caucus actually taking charge and leading in this whole effort. I just want to thank you again for giving us the chance to be here.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you Representative Lee. The House of Representatives does have a vote in about 15 minutes. Therefore, let me come right back to you. In comment—because I know you're going to have to slip out. I know the Senate has about a 2:15 as well so we'll keep moving. This is a global conference and to have 23, 24, 25 thousand people here is a rare opportunity for the United States of America. To have this conference—I want you to comment on the significance of this conference.

We're here in Washington, D.C. where all of us know the incidence and the prevalence is very high of the virus and the ravages of the virus. It took an initiative by a Representative Lee on the Travel Ban, which reversed an earlier policy, but comment on those two things. The significance of this conference, number one. Number two, your leadership role on the Travel Ban, which made it possible actually to have this conference in—

REP. BARBARA LEE (D-CA): Thank you again. Let me just say I—[applause]—Senator Frist and my brothers and sisters. Thank you all for being here because many of you helped us move

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forward to get this Travel Ban lifted. It was not easy. I have participated in every international aids conference since '98. I wanted to have a conference here in America so we could share the global spotlight on our domestic epidemic. It wasn't easy; we had all kinds of issues.

I'll tell you one thing, when we were in Mexico City I told Christos Centos, who's a wonderful former staffer who— [applause]—you know Christos. I said Christos, they're saying we can't do this, I said yes, we can. No one believed we could do it but we wrote the legislation and moved forward in the legislative process. Then President Bush was in office.

I won't go through all the technical details but bottom-line is we were able to incorporate the Travel Ban and the—lifting of the Travel Ban and the reauthorization of PEPFAR. President Bush signed that into law. President Obama again lifted the Travel Ban. You had Republicans and Democrats moving forward to do this because it was an unjust, discriminatory Travel Ban.

Last conference was in San Francisco 22 years ago. We've lost a lot of ground in terms of being able to be part of the world community in our response and in our efforts to seek an AIDS free generation.

Finally, the significance of having this conference here in America is enormous. We have, first of all as an example, an epidemic in the African American community where

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14-percent of the population, yet over 50-percent of the new infections, African Americans. Southern states, newest epidemics, new infections in the South. We have African American women, two thirds of all infections among women.

We have a major epidemic where in some communities the percentages are comparable to sub-Saharan Africa. Having the conference here really gives us a chance to shed some light on what we need to do here and in the discriminatory laws that criminalize HIV and AIDS. We have 34 states in these United States that have criminal statutes on the books.

Once again, I'm a member of the UN Commission Health Global HIV/AIDS and the Law. We've identified countries that need to begin to lift these discriminatory practices. That's part of the discussion here at this conference. We are part of the world community.

Finally we've had a conference here where we could share best practices and have people, all of you who have come from afar and from abroad, to meet some of our wonderful people here who have some great ideas and who moving forward. Of course, we need additional resources for our national HIV/AIDS strategy here and we need additional resources for PEPFAR and for the Global Fund. We're working together; finally we're able to this as a world community. [applause] Thank you again, I'm going to have to run to the Hill to vote. Thank you Senator so much. [interposing]

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SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you Barbara, you're a tremendous leader in global AIDS and global HIV and global health. Thank you Barbara. Thank you all very much.

I think Representative Lee bracketed very well my earlier comments about what went on before 2003. The announcement itself, the sense of time and place with the conference that is here today.

I want to turn quickly to another one of our veterans, Senator Enzi who I had the real privilege of serving with during my entire time in the United States Senate. Tell us a little bit, Mike, about that sense of time and place. When the president of the United States in a 2003 State of the Union message, about two thirds of the way through that State of the Union message, gave a commitment that is unprecedented in the history of the world in terms of the direct focus with the resources and a commitment to those resources after this little cagey virus of HIV and malaria and tuberculosis. Take us back to that time and the significance of that.

SEN. MIKE ENZI (R-WY): I vividly remember the State of the Union speech and the shock that swept through the entire chamber, both Republicans and Democrats, when the president said we were going to put 15 billion dollars into AIDS in other countries. We were going to challenge the rest of the world to help also. Well 15 billion dollars is still a lot of money so there were a lot of ideas that were floating around there.

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Under the leadership of Senator Frist, we started having meetings on the Senate side and realized that without the help of the House and the White House that it wasn't going to happen. He convened a meeting with both of those, I was the Chairman of the Health Committee and we had the Foreign Relations Committee and we had Republicans and Democrats, House, Senate and White House. We came up with a plan that because the bill.

The interesting thing about that is that bill passed both the House and the Senate unanimously, un-amended, in less than two months. That never happens. [applause] It was a realization of the problem and the need as put across by President Bush to get started on solving this pandemic which was also in the United States. That message continued on until we were asked to reauthorize it again. We reauthorized it; we reauthorized it for more dollars, again in a bipartisan way. I got to tell you we didn't have quite the same votes that we had the first time.

SEN. BILL FRIST: That was five years later. Wasn't it five years?

SEN. MIKE ENZI (R-WY): Yes. We still need to be emphasizing this need both internationally and within the United States for the funding and the efforts.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you Mike. I think as we come back. [Protestors chanting] As we look at the past, it's also

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very important that we look to the future and to do that I'd like to introduce our two new members who have come in since this initial passage and the reauthorization itself.

[Protestors chanting] Let's move to those new members. The first will be Senator Rubio. [Protestors chanting]

Please allow the conference to continue. Please allow the conference to continue otherwise we cannot hear from people like-[protestors chanting].

SEN. MIKE ENZI (R-WY): I've helped reauthorize the Ryan White Bill twice and will do it again; it's time to do it.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you. Let me turn to Senator Rubio. Could you just [protestors chanting] Please be quiet, please hold it down just because we can't get to the panel. You've cut our, I believe short by 10 minutes, and just—we've heard it but just please be [protestors chanting]. Please be courteous of the audience please and let us continue through. We've got a lot more information that I think will be engaging to you and clearly to us.

Let me turn to Senator Rubio. You have focused on global AIDS issues and in particular your voice has been quite loud and it will be quite loud in the future as we go forward. You had inspiring and educational message on World AIDS Day when you participated in a very historic event in which President Obama talked about an AIDS free generation. Reflect

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on that a bit and how you see that being projected into the future to make that a reality.

SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL): This is a new issue for me; I've just been in the Senate for a year and a half. Obviously when I was in the state legislature we dealt with this issue. As Congresswoman Lee pointed out a moment ago, we have a significant domestic issue in the United States with regards to this. In Florida in particular, we have some the leading communities in the country on domestic infection. [Protestor interposing] [applause] When—

SEN. BILL FRIST: Please, please allow our speakers to continue. If you could please allow our speakers to continue it would be very helpful as we go through. Marco go ahead, we'll give it a try and if not—[protestors chanting]

SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL): We came here today to talk about this program that I think that there's been significant— in a country that's significantly divided politically, there's actually this bipartisan agreement on an issue of major importance in the world.

I approached it from two points of view. The first is generationally, when I was growing up the notion that there would be an effective treatment for AIDS that would keep people alive, much less the prospect of a generation that wouldn't know what it was because it would be eradicated, and it was

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unimaginable. This was just two decades ago. I think that prospect alone was one that interested me.

The other is just the staggering human element of it. I don't think it's possible to come face-to-face with these numbers of entire parts of the world that are facing this in a staggering way. The impact that it had on me personally to see the human aspect of it. I by no means am an expert; I'm continuing to learn about this issue.

I would say that I am committed to doing is ensuring that this remains an issue that we remain focused on in a bipartisan way and not allow this issue to become politicized. I think it's something the country should be proud of, the amount of investment the American taxpayer has made on this effort at a time of significant fiscal constraint.

People always ask, but why in this time when there's so many things happening here at home, why are we—you hear people ask, not just this program in particular but in general on foreign aid, why do we spend any other countries when we have these problems. I can make an argument to you that it's in our national interest to do that.

I think the bigger argument is that we are going to be asked by future generations where we were when these things were happening. Where were you when people were dying? Where were you when hundreds of thousands of children were left orphaned? Where were you when people were losing their lives

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on this issue and living in a nation that had the resources to make a difference?

I think that as much as anything else is something that should motivate us to act on it. Knowing that we have a generational opportunity to really make a difference and do something unique at a historic level.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Did it surprise you having been here for a year and a half of the bipartisanship? Again, I think it's important for our audience to understand that the sense of what the Congress is all about. Is this an issue that is bigger or smaller than you had anticipated? [interposing]—to the—

SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL): I'm pleasantly surprised by the bipartisanship of it. My bigger concern is and it's one of the reasons why it's important the conference is in America, my bigger concern is that I think it's an issue that's lost focus domestically. People now think well there's a way to treat it so there's no—we can move on to other diseases or other humanitarian crises around the world.

The reality of it is that this issue continues to evolve in ways that we need to be cognizant of. I think there needs to continue to be innovation in medications that are available. The need to become more affordable. They need to become more effective. There's a risk that these medications

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will lose their effectiveness over time. I think that there's a worry about that.

I think there's always the concern that from a funding perspective it loses priority, that other issues take its place. I think we have a job to do here, I think we have a very clear goal in mind of what we can accomplish by certain dates and I think we need to push hard to finish the job and encourage other countries to join us in the endeavor as well.
[Applause]

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you. This transition of where we are today—yesterday I introduced Doctor Delhi Muggo at the plenary session. The slides were coming up and we had the room packed but when she said, "We've never been in this position before," it hit me. We have a huge responsibility to take what we all celebrate over the last five years and move ahead. That's why I very much appreciate both Senator Rubio and Senator Coons being here as we project forward with the appropriate voice.

Senator Coons, let me turn to you, you've made this importance of strong U.S. engagement in Africa a key focus since you have been in the Senate. Including specifically addressing global HIV/AIDS, why? What inspired you? It's not like it's the number one issue among mainstream America, the first thing that comes to the mind. Where'd it come from?

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SEN. CHRIS COONS (D-DE): Senator Frist, I do come from the state of Delaware where we've had one of the higher infection rates and prevalence rates. I've been concerned about and engaged in HIV/AIDS in my home state. I was initially inspired by folks who I lived with; studied with, work with, in East Africa in 1984 and 1987.

I was in Uganda and Kenya and Tanzania at time when the pandemic was first really roaring through these communities and causing enormous devastation at a time when it really was not well understood at all and where there wasn't a coordinated global response.

What inspired me was in part the real profound human tragedy of mass deaths and of misunderstanding, of bigotry, of fear in the United States and in Africa. What continues to inspire me is the leadership that you showed, that Senator Enzi showed, that Congresswoman Lee showed, that President Bush showed. I think the President and Congress, more than a decade ago, when PEPFAR, when the United States launched a real concerted bipartisan effort at global leadership and tackling this pandemic is inspiring.

Senator Rubio and I both have young children. We'd like to continue the leadership that this country has shown in tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic at home and abroad. We can't take that for granted in what is an incredibly difficult, very partisan and a very divided Congress at time when our politics

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are in some ways the rockiest they've been in more than a generation. It has been really refreshing to be able to work closely with Republicans.

I'm the Chair of the African Affairs Subcommittee; on Foreign Relations, Johnny Isaacson, Republican Senator from Georgia has been a tremendous partner. The folks who have sustained this funding, who have pushed for and pressed for this funding, are Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, in the House.

I think that's a great tribute to you. It's a tribute to the activists, to advocates, to the healthcare workers, to the families who've continued to bring this crisis to forefront; who've sustained its global visibility and who've challenged us to remain engaged.

There are so many other areas where we need bipartisanship, I'm just grateful that this has been one where our very real leadership at home and abroad has been sustained. I look forward to continuing to work in sustaining this funding and making sure that our investments are as effective as they possibly can be.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you. [applause] Again, this sort of where we are today and where we go forward. To hear two voices of people who weren't there at the table as so many of you were in the audience today and project ahead and listen

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to both the words and how we can do that is just helpful to me.
I know.

Senator Enzi, one of the things in Washington, for those people who are from other countries and say, what is this Congress and what does it do? What are the important ways that we learn? It's an ongoing process, we've got millions of issues, is to participate directly. Remember shortly after I became Majority Leader, one of the first things I did was to take nine or eight other United States Senators to Africa.

Many of whom had not been there. You were on that trip and I'd love for you just to mention that. More importantly, you've been able to observe the sort of changes that are inherent in the commitments of dollars yes, but the resources that we've all participated in some little way. Reflect a little bit on that for me.

SEN. MIKE ENZI (R-WY): I remember well the trip that you took us on. I'd always wanted to go to Africa but I had pictured more climbing the pyramid and riding a camel. I have never been to Egypt but I have been to some of the poorest of poor places in the Africa. It's been a shock to my system. That first trip that we took, we visited an orphanage; 25 kids in the orphanage, five receiving antiretrovirals.

We asked what happened to the rest of them, they said, unless they get antiretrovirals they will die by the time they're five. How would you like to be the person that picks

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the five that get to live? It was more than I could take. We went to hospitals. I found a 3,000 bed hospital three people are being treated. Partly because that's all they could afford and partly because they didn't trust the United States. A lot of trust has come out of this and a lot of lives have been saved.

We learned from the Gates Foundation in Botswana that the biggest problem is these people don't have transportation. We're use to everybody having their babies in a hospital and being able to get there, and probably get there in a hurry, but they have to walk over there.

The Gates Foundation had donated a bunch of suburban's and a guy would get up in the morning and drive 200 kilometers and pick people up and drop them off at one end of an AIDS clinic and later pick them up at the other end and return them home, and the next day he'd get up and he'd do another 200 kilometers to a different area, that hadn't occurred to us.

The transmission from mother to child we had learned that there was a dose the mother could take when she went into labor and then a liquid dose that could be given to the baby right after birth and it would stop it in 95-percent of the cases.

Now, one of the things that we've learned since that time, because that created some problems by itself, first of all often the men thought that this pill the woman had was a

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magic pill that would stop their AIDS, and so the pills go stolen.

We hadn't thought about how the liquid dose is going to be administered to a baby out in the middle of nowhere, but another problem was that they couldn't breastfeed then, because the milk would transmit the disease as well, but what we've learned in the meantime now that antiretrovirals are more available worldwide is that if the mother starts taking the antiretrovirals while she's pregnant chances are pretty good that the baby will not have AIDS. She can nurse the baby and the baby will continue to get not only nutrition, but also the medication, a tremendous difference.

We also learned that circumcision and ending cervical cancer, and that a lot of times tuberculosis and malaria play into it. There are just a lot of things that we don't have to think about in the United States, and I wish that everybody in America could have a chance to go to Africa, particularly the young people, to see the conditions that they're living under, but what they have taught us that's been very valuable in this war against AIDS.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Let me just say and this is important. We need to have more members of Congress, 435 people in Congress, 100 United States Senators to be able to tell the story, because ultimately we're not going to be able

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to get the appropriate funding. This body determines the funding and the legislation itself.

Since Mike went over with me for the first time he has gone back to the continent seven times, seven times to see the progress [applause], to see the intimate results and outcomes, and at the bottom line of it all of these people, not [inaudible] do represent a million, 5 million, 10 million, 20 million people, and to be able to tell the story that he just told directly to people who they lead has a direct impact.

It does come down to appropriate legislation and funding, and it's important for all of us to understand that. Let me turn it back to Senator Rubio, because the current debate now, again let's make this really current and useful, as a representative this is one big issue.

The central organizing issue that you'll be hearing about in the presidential election, who the next president is, a new congress coming in is the debt, is the deficit, in fact as a percentage of GDP we are under fiscal restraints that never, only really one time, but never in recent history have we been.

How are we going to work our way through that? What do you tell people? The number one issue is jobs, debt, deficit, and yet we have an issue now that we know is affecting millions, and millions, and millions of people around the world that we need to continue to give voice to? [Inaudible 00:34:16]

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Let's let him answer the question. Please let him answer the question. Again we're going to run out of time and we've cut Barbara Lee short by 20 minutes.

SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL): The issue of whether the United States should be spending money on AIDS policy and global health in light of this debt is something that comes up quite often. The first answer is it's not the reason why we have a debt. We don't have a debt because of foreign aid, although a lot of you -- some of this public polling-- [applause].

Some of the public polling indicates that the majority of American people in these polls anyway think the U.S. spends 20 or 25-percent of its money on foreign aid, it's like less than 1-percent, so it's not the reason why we have the debt. In fact if you zeroed out foreign aid it would do nothing for the debt, but it would be devastating not just for the world, but for America's role in it [applause].

The second thing I would say is that the issue speaks to the core of who we are as a people. And I think one of the things that I'm proudest of, of this nation is its legacy of compassion, it's willingness to be compassionate, and of its people to be compassionate, because at the end of the day this is the taxpayers money, not mine, the taxpayers money.

I think the willingness of the American people to fund a program like this in a bipartisan way I think is a testament

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to our legacy as a nation of compassion. It's also a challenge to continue that legacy.

The last thing I would say in the most pragmatic way possible, separate from the human element of this, which can never be overstated, is I think it's in the national interest of the United States. I think it's in the national interest of the United States to help eradicate AIDS, for just on the African continent. The idea that millions of people will survive and live productive lives means they can be our partners in trade, they can be our partner in culture, they can be our partner in all sorts of endeavors, because prosperity around the world has always meant prosperity here in our country.

Of all the countries in the world none is more global than ours, our economy, our society is so much a reflection of the world and the cultures of the world that come here to do business or come here to visit, or come here to interact with us, and so as much as any nation on the earth, America is not immune to things that are happening around the planet, and that includes disease and that includes of course AIDS.

SEN. BILL FRIST: And how receptive are constituents? I mean the reality is, is that everybody here has been elected to office, is that message coming through do you think, as you [interposing]-

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SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL): AIDS and foreign aid are – in some ways people can separate the two topics, because I think people understand this is about caring for folks that are going to die unless something is done, and that the only nation on earth that has the resources to put the kind of money that has been put into this program at the levels we funded it at is us.

I think that I've never had anyone say they're not going to support me because of it. I don't think that's the challenge. I don't think convincing people that this is a good idea is as big a challenge as convincing people that we should keep doing it. There's two separate issues.

One thing is to be opposed to it. I don't think you're going to find people that are opposed to it. The other issue is to get people excited about the opportunity before us, that's really the challenge. Excited about the idea that we, those of us like me who grew up in a generation where AIDS was a death sentence can literally live in a world where there may not be anyone on the earth with it, that we will live to see that is something we should be excited about as an opportunity.

SEN. BILL FRIST: I think it's a perfection transition. I want to turn to Senator Coons, because we've got to start looking ahead. We can't really keep the exact same message as we've had in the past. If there's one thing this conference in the United States is doing this weekend is the celebration of the past, but how do we articulate, and frame, and use what we

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have learned from the very positive past investment as we look ahead. What's it going to take to sustain U.S. global leadership on issues like HIV?

SEN. CHRIS COONS (D-DE): It's a challenge, but it's something that we can do. Each of knows people, friends, family, neighbors who we've lost to this terrible disease, and each of us knows people, family, friends, neighbors, coworkers who are living with this disease.

As we look forward we do have a significant challenge in the United States, as in so many other countries our budget is under real pressure, and we've got two pathways forward. One is to cut, is to cut spending and to restrict access to healthcare, and to exclude, and to deny, and to find ways to reduce, and reduce, and reduce our investment.

I think the numbers show that both domestically in the United States for a path forward for Medicare and Medicaid, and overseas in terms of our investment in healthcare, that's not a pathway that reflects our values or that is really ultimately successful.

The better pathway, I think, is one where we double down, where we invest further in basic science, in translational medicine, in the development of vaccines and treatments, and improving the delivery of healthcare, both at home and abroad, that we broaden our focus of exactly who we're treating and how, and who's part of the solution, and we

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innovate and cure our way out of this, that I think is in keeping in with the optimism and entrepreneurship of the American character, and that's a way for us to keep faith with the leadership that you showed at the very foundation of this PEPFAR initiative.

I think the great thing about this conference is it's an opportunity for you to challenge us yet again to be global leaders in partnerships with the nations that are our partner in this struggle. We've seen some real challenges, and some real changes.

As Secretary Clinton said, I believe earlier this week, we're at a point where we have to make PEPFAR more sustainable and that means being more accountable and more transparent, and our being able to say to the people we represent, the American dollars that are being invested are being invested wisely and well.

We need to be able to say that our partners around the world are partners in the burden, in the challenge of treating and curing this disease, and that has dramatically changed. In 2011 for the first time domestic spending by nations overseas on the AIDS healthcare costs exceeded donor contributions. We have more than 40 countries that are carrying three quarters of the cost of the ongoing domestic support, and that's in part because their economies are growing.

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Then last we have to be strategic. As I suggested investing in gain changing research, investing and delivering and developing vaccines and investing in innovations and healthcare delivery will not just beat this disease, will not just cure people of HIV/AIDS, will not just end the AIDS pandemic, but will lay the foundation for tackling a whole family of diseases, and problems, and challenges that face the whole globe.

I think that is the optimistic path forward and the one that actually in the end is most true to the American character and spirit, and the most likely for us to be able to sustain in a bipartisan way in the Congress.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you very much. That whole concept of capturing the innovation as we go forward. Mike, I represented six or seven million Tennesseans for 12 years and I'm kind of glad to be out of the business to be honest, but you represent Wyoming, how do you justify what the deficit, the debt, the job, the political elections are coming up, all of the other very real challenges that we have? What do you say? And then how do you view the future as you make this transition?

SEN. MIKE ENZI (R-WY): Because you involved me in this it was not a big problem in Wyoming. There was a problem, but not the kind you have to be involved in every day, but I've been involved in it on a daily basis since I got involved with

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this and realized what the problem is in the United States as well as overseas.

What happens over there affects us over here, and the people of Wyoming are beginning to recognize that. They're also seeing for the first time some appreciation from other countries for what the United States is going. This is one of the first efforts that's ever actually gotten down to the people. Most of our effort gets stopped at the government level and the people never know about it.

If you ask people from Africa what the United States has done, probably the one thing that they will mention is help with AIDS and without that help they'd be in a real fix. The most effective thing that all of you can do is share your stories.

Share your stories, do as the Africans have been doing, share some appreciation for what's been done, and help us to know what would make the future better. As I mentioned we're going to be reauthorizing the Ryan White, as well as PEPFAR, and your stories will help us to sell that not only in D.C., but back in our home states. The home states are important at the same time.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you. Senator Rubio, what about the future? You've come to Washington D.C., it's a more partisan town that it was when 2003, 2004, and it's time Ryan White was initially passed. How do you see this playing out in

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terms of framing it and how do you see the future going forward, both helping us frame the debate, but as you will?

SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL): I think my immediate concern I've already touched upon earlier, is that somehow success leads to complacency. I think what I worry about the most is that even here domestically now we've seen the focus on this kind of shift away to other diseases and other problems, because the perceptions been created that there's no issue here to deal with.

The fact of the matter is there are some ongoing issues. There's concern about resistance to the medications, there are concerns about the costs of the affordability of being able to provide this. The costs are still significant, particularly in the developed world.

My hope is that what we'll see is continued investment and a heightened sense of – the closer we get to the finish line is not the time to ease up. It's the time to run through the tape, as they say in track and field parlance, do you want to run through in the finish, and if that means increased investment in innovation, you want better treatments that are more cost effective and easier to deliver, and that takes an investment of time, energy, money, and resources.

You want your best and brightest researchers around the world to be focused on HIV/AIDS, and so that we can finish the

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job of solving this problem whatever that solution is ultimately going to be.

I just hope we don't lose that sense of urgency about it, that somehow it's not diverted to many other worthy causes around the world, but this one is as the precipice of real dynamic changing developments, but we've got to keep the focus on it, because of the investment and the energies lost behind it, then we kind of get stuck, the progress stops happening, and then it takes years to restart it again.

SEN. BILL FRIST: The bipartisanship, I don't want to over stress, but it was a part of the history. Again those of you from other countries your sort of got a bimodal distribution and the bimodal ends up getting further and further apart, and I'll open it up to the whole panel here. Just how do we forge – it's a non-partisan issue, how do we fashion bipartisanship within the committees that all of your work on.

These are the leaders today on these issues. How do you lead, you got both parties represented, where you're not just talking to your party and your base, or you go to cable TV where it forces you out. How do we make this, how do we keep this a bipartisan issue practically in these strange institutions of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives.

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SEN. CHRIS COONS (D-DE): Senator, I do think a critical part of it is visiting HIV/AIDS clinics and healthcare centers here in the United States and overseas. As I mentioned earlier, I spent time in Uganda, and Kenya, and Tanzania in 1984 and 1987. I just returned about six weeks ago with a delegation from the House and Senate.

I went to TASO Mulago clinic in Kampala, I went to Burguri [misspelled?] clinic in Dar es Salaam and was really impressed with the caliber of the service that they are delivering about how CDC and PEPFAR have integrated services about how they're training local healthcare workers and how effectively they're delivering care.

There's lessons in that both for how we deliver care here and for how much of a distance there is to go. And I have to be able to stand in front of the people Delaware and explain the ongoing significant investment we're making to sustain American leadership. There was one story that stuck with me about malaria.

I was very encouraged to hear in Tanzania, an island of about a million people off of the mainland of Tanzania, that we have nearly completely eradicated malaria, through bed nets and through fogging, and through a variety of interventions, and the President of Zanzibar said to me, yes, yes, just as we did back in 1967, and I said, excuse me, and he said the United

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States came in and in partnership with some community groups we eradicated malaria back in 1967.

I said but didn't you just say that there was a 60-percent prevalence rate just five years ago, yes. We weren't able to sustain a malaria free Zanzibar, and so to the point Senator Rubio just made, sustaining this is going to take this kind of continual travel exposure and reinforcement on a bipartisan basis that challenges us to not just develop an event and deliver treatments and cures, but also to be engaged around the world in ways that make that effective. This is going to be a long, long struggle, it will. It'll be a long fight, and it's one that we're committed to being in for the long haul, but we need you to be committed to being in it with us [applause].

SEN. BILL FRIST: I think this whole idea of engagement U.S. leadership. I wanted to ask both of you all also about the bipartisanship, because I just think it's real as we play out. But if you look at what the United States does in terms of leadership, and I talked to the Director of the CDC yesterday, and basically I didn't know this, but our CDC in the United States is responsible for about 50 or 60-percent of the [shouting]. I better start [shouting]. Let me continue on the bipartisanship, how [shouting] - hang on just a second, I'll come to you.

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Let me have them finish their questions and then I'll come to you and give you 30 seconds. Mike, under the bipartisanship [shouting], let me turn it to both of you, what can we do? We mentioned travel, is there anything else that we can do as we go forward to make sure that this stays a bipartisan issue [shouting]?

SEN. MIKE ENZI (R-WY): The ultimate challenge is always to lead by example and I think the thing the we have to make sure is that this issue never becomes a partisan one, that we don't allow it to become a republican or a democratic issue, that we don't let it become a liberal versus conservative issue, that we keep it a bipartisan issue in the way we talk about it and the way we engage on it, so that's what I hope we'll continue to do on it [shouting].

SEN. BILL FRIST: Everybody, hang on. How long? Can you take one minute?

MALE SPEAKER: Let him speak.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Okay, why don't you take one minute? Go ahead, why don't you take one minutes. Sir, sir, they'll turn the mic up, just hang on a second, so we can hear him speak. Just so we can hear – sit down, so we can hear him speak, just sit down for a second. I want to hear him speak and please take a minute.

MALE SPEAKER: Listen I have something to tell you.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Yes.

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MALE SPEAKER: What we have to do is to stop saying we need to, we need to, we need to, and move through, we have to, we must, and we will.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Do what?

MALE SPEAKER: We will reform the AIDS response, because 10 million people in my country are still waiting.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Where are you from?

MALE SPEAKER: I'm Gambian.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Yes.

MALE SPEAKER: I use to live in South Africa, spent time in Kenya, I knew everybody in Africa. I know the stories and I live with HIV, so you have to listen to me to tell you the story.

SEN. BILL FRIST: Let's hear it, but can you keep it to about a minute or so.

MALE SPEAKER: Let me tell you what I'm going to say. Will you listen? You created a system that continue to kill us, my HIV is angry and I'm pissed off [shouting], because you are watching people die when you can stop them from dying, you're watching babies get infected and when in your country people can survive AIDS, but others in Africa can't survive the disease. Are you trying to tell me because we're poor, and if we are born in a poorer continent we have to die.

Is that what you're trying to tell me? Is that what you're really trying to tell me? Will you give me the excuse

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that black people in the Bronx, who don't have jobs will not get HIV medications, because they don't have jobs, and the insurance can't support them [applause].

My question is the Global Fund is out of money, don't give me the excuse of financial restraint. We want to save lives and we want you to ask fast. It's about the lives of people like me, around the world there's about 10 million people who need drugs.

It's about the millions of people who you've given your word years ago and told them you would survive, because you put money into the Global Fund, we put money into the PEPFAR. We will not criminalize people. We make sure babies don't get HIV.

We make sure every woman is protected, that every person that sells sex is safe, that people that are on medications get the very best of them, and here you are telling me stories about people in my country, telling me stories about people that I know. We are pissed off and we can't wait to listen what you will do [shouting].

SEN. BILL FRIST: Thank you. Thank you. Listen, I appreciate it. It's 2:00 now, but I appreciate everybody coming today, I know the schedule dictates that we bring our discussion to a close. We've made tremendous progress that is time to both talk about and to celebrate.

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I very much appreciate the leadership of the four representatives before you today, their thoughtfulness, their commitment, their boldness, and I ask the audience to give these four individuals, and the United States leadership a round of applause [applause].

Thank you all for being with us and thank you for all that you do for fighting HIV/AIDS around America and around the world. Thank you.

[END RECORDING]

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