

BUSH ADMINISTRATION NOT MAKING THE GRADE IN THE WAR ON AIDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington, D.C. – The polls may show that President Bush is getting good grades for his war on terrorism, but he is not making the grade in the war on HIV/AIDS, according to a national coalition of AIDS organizations from throughout the United States. As the AIDS pandemic enters its third decade, the coalition, in a letter to the President, states that there are few other issues that need the Administration's immediate attention more than ending the toll of HIV/AIDS. There are an estimated 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS throughout the world. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are approximately 950,000 HIV infected people in the U.S.

The coalition released its assessment of the Bush Administration today, on the eve of the first meeting of the newly appointed Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA). The coalition grades the Bush Administration on funding and leadership in the following areas:

- Healthcare
- Housing
- Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative
- Prevention
- Research
- Global AIDS
- Executive Office of the President and Leadership

In the letter to the President, the coalition members spell out their concerns, ranging from a lack of leadership in the fight against AIDS at home and abroad, to funding for AIDS prevention, research, and treatment programs, and filling key government healthcare positions that are vacant or will soon become vacant. The most notable positions are at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the Food and Drug Administration.

In its assessment, the coalition commends the Administration for retaining the PACHA. However, the coalition expresses its concern about some of the individuals appointed to PACHA. These members have public track records of supporting HIV/AIDS policies that are at odds with science, public health experts, people living with HIV/AIDS, and community-based providers. They have also made statements viewed as homophobic and discredited sound, proven HIV prevention strategies.

The coalition calls on the President to exert his leadership to help end the suffering caused by AIDS. The coalition expresses its desire to work with the Administration and asks for a meeting with Mr. Bush and key officials to discuss the issues related to AIDS.

The report can be viewed online at www.nmac.org/policy/bushreport.htm

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AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts - AIDS Foundation of Chicago - AIDS Project Los Angeles - AIDS Services of Dallas - AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition - CAEAR Coalition - Columbus AIDS Task Force - Gay Men's Health Crisis - Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund - National AIDS Housing Coalition - National Association of People with AIDS - National Minority AIDS Council - Project Inform - San Francisco AIDS Foundation - Whitman-Walker Clinic

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