

Remarks on World AIDS Day December 1, 2008

Good morning. Today is World AIDS Day, a day we reaffirm our commitment to fight HIV/AIDS at home and abroad. Thirty-three million people around the world are living with HIV, including more than 1 million Americans. Once again this year, to observe World AIDS Day, there is a red ribbon on the North Portico of the White House. The ribbon is a symbol of our resolve to confront HIV/AIDS and to affirm the matchless value of every life.

One of the most important initiatives of my administration has been the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR. It's the largest international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. When we launched PEPFAR, our goal was to support treatment for 2 million people in 5 years. Today I'm pleased to announce that we have exceeded that goal early.

American people, through PEPFAR, are supporting lifesaving treatment for more than 2 million people around the world. And when PEPFAR began, only 50,000 people living with HIV in all of sub-Saharan Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment.

Around the world, we've also supported care for more than 10 million people af-

ected by HIV, including more than 4 million orphans and vulnerable children. More than 237,000 babies have been born HIV-free, thanks to the support of the American people for programs to prevent mothers from passing the virus on to their children.

PEPFAR is bringing hope and healing to people around the world. On our trips to Africa, Laura and I have witnessed firsthand the gratitude of the African people.

We look forward to discussing our efforts to combat global HIV/AIDS with Rick Warren at the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health this morning. In the meantime, we thank our fellow citizens for being so compassionate and so caring and so decent.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. on the North Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard D. Warren, pastor, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The World AIDS Day proclamation of November 26 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health December 1, 2008

Richard D. Warren. Well, Mr. President, I want to start by admitting to the audience that you always call me "Ricky." [Laughter]

The President. Yes, you always call me "Georgie." [Laughter]

Mr. Warren. There are only three people in my life who call me "Ricky": my mother, my grandmother, and the President.

So now we've got three purposes here this day. First, thanks for being here on the 20th anniversary of AIDS—World AIDS Day. We want to do a little information, we want to do a little celebration, and we want to do a little explanation.

First, I want to get a progress report on PEPFAR and an update on what's actually happened. Then I want us to talk about