

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 848

To amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to authorize assistance to combat HIV/AIDS in certain countries of the Caribbean region.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 6, 2007

Mr. FORTUÑO introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to authorize assistance to combat HIV/AIDS in certain countries of the Caribbean region.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) According to the Joint United Nations Pro-
6 gram on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the adult preva-
7 lence rate of the human immunodeficiency virus and
8 the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/
9 AIDS) in the Caribbean region was 1.2 percent in
10 2006, second only to sub-Saharan Africa.

1 (2) Some 250,000 people in the Caribbean re-
2 gion were estimated to be living with HIV in 2006,
3 including 15,000 children.

4 (3) An estimated 27,000 people in the Carib-
5 bean region became infected with HIV in 2006, in-
6 cluding 2,400 children.

7 (4) The AIDS epidemic claimed an estimated
8 19,000 lives in the Caribbean region in 2006, includ-
9 ing 2,000 children.

10 (5) AIDS is one of the leading causes of death
11 among adults aged 15–44 years in the Caribbean re-
12 gion.

13 (6) The countries of the Caribbean region with
14 the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in 2006 were the Ba-
15 hamas, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago,
16 with rates between 2 to 4 percent; and Barbados,
17 the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Suriname,
18 with rates between 1 to 2 percent.

19 (7) In contrast to other parts of the Western
20 Hemisphere, the mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS
21 in the Caribbean region has been primarily through
22 unprotected contact, which makes it difficult to con-
23 tain the epidemic because it affects the general pop-
24 ulation.

1 (8) Stigma and discrimination, which drives
2 people away from services for HIV, have fueled the
3 spread of HIV in the Caribbean region.

4 (9) According to UNAIDS, women account for
5 one-half of adults living with HIV/AIDS in the Car-
6 ibbean region.

7 (10) A 2004 report by the Pan Caribbean Part-
8 nership Against HIV/AIDS maintained that the epi-
9 demic is taking its greatest toll on younger people
10 who traditionally have been the most productive
11 human resources.

12 (11) The AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean re-
13 gion has begun to have negative consequences for
14 economic and social development, with life expect-
15 ancy and infant mortality already affected in some
16 countries. In 2006, UNAIDS reported that life ex-
17 pectancy in the Dominican Republic was estimated
18 to be three years lower than without the AIDS epi-
19 demic, and that AIDS mortality in Trinidad and To-
20 bago would begin to reduce the country's overall
21 population by 2010.

22 (12) Because of high population mobility in the
23 region, Caribbean countries have called for an inclu-
24 sive approach to the AIDS crisis involving all coun-
25 tries in the region. Ambassadors of Caribbean coun-

1 tries to the United States maintain that high HIV/
 2 AIDS prevalence rates can overwhelm the region's
 3 health care capacity, destabilize economies, and in-
 4 crease migration flows, which could pose a security
 5 risk to the United States because of its proximity to
 6 the Caribbean.

7 (13) Assistant Secretary General of the Organi-
 8 zation of American States Albert Ramdin stated in
 9 January 2007 that "HIV/AIDS, if not effectively
 10 and urgently tackled, poses a clear threat to the sus-
 11 tainable development, social stability, and human se-
 12 curity of the Caribbean."

13 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS IN CERTAIN**
 14 **COUNTRIES OF THE CARIBBEAN REGION.**

15 Section 1(f)(2)(B)(ii)(VII) of the State Department
 16 Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C.
 17 2651a(f)(2)(B)(ii)(VII)) is amended by inserting after
 18 "Zambia," the following: "Antigua and Barbuda, the Ba-
 19 hamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica,
 20 Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the
 21 Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago,
 22 and Dominican Republic,".

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