

Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

19TH INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am proud that the 19th biennial International AIDS conference is being held in the Nation's Capital after 22 years of being held abroad.

President Obama was instrumental in bringing the conference back to the United States by announcing in October 2009 that the United States would lift its entry restriction on people living with HIV.

The United States has been the leader in combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and it is fitting that this significant meeting of the best and brightest scientists, philanthropists, activists, government leaders, and people living with HIV/AIDS is taking place in Washington, DC.

It is made even more symbolic by the fact that Washington, DC, has the highest rate of AIDS than any city in the Nation.

As we look to "Turn the Tide Together," as the theme of the conference indicates, we must continue to support a number of long-term strategies both at home and around the world, building on the successes we have seen in the past few decades.

Significant scientific breakthroughs have been made this year alone, and we can see investments we have made to fight HIV/AIDS beginning to pay off.

The National Institutes of Health, for example, released a study last fall on the HPTN 052 clinical trial that showed that if newly infected individuals started antiretroviral treatment when their immune systems are relatively healthy, they are 96 percent less likely to transmit the virus to their uninfected partner.

Others report that the cost of treating HIV is four times less than previously thought. And now more than ever, scientists believe that an effective HIV vaccine is within reach.

These are amazing breakthroughs and could reflect the beginning of the end as we work toward an AIDS-free generation.

This past year new infection rates and AIDS deaths decreased. Twenty percent more people had access to antiretroviral therapy worldwide in 2011 than they did in 2010.

These numbers don't appear out of thin air—they correlate to increased investments from the United States and the Global Fund. This is a time when we must continue funding our investments to fight HIV/AIDS.

But let's talk about how we have achieved these amazing results.

President Bush was instrumental in establishing PEPFAR. The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief was initially a \$15 billion commitment over 5 years to fight the AIDS pandemic.

Today, PEPFAR is one of the largest health initiatives ever established by a single country and remains critical to saving millions of lives.

PEPFAR is a strongly bipartisan program, and since its inception, it has directly supported nearly 13 million people with access to care and services.

As of 2011, the United States supported lifesaving antiretroviral treatment for more than 3.9 million men, women, and children worldwide.

PEPFAR counseled 9.8 million pregnant women to test them for HIV/AIDS, allowing more than 200,000 babies to be born AIDS-free.

Another key ally in the fight against AIDS is the Global Fund.

The Global Fund was established in 2002 as a public-private partnership, requiring the buy-in of grant recipient countries. These participants must commit to continuing the program and serving its people after the Global Fund grant expires.

This novel approach has proved wildly successful. To date, the Global Fund has supported more than 1,000 programs in 151 countries and provided AIDS treatment to over 3 million people.

The United States must continue to be a leading supporter of the Global Fund.

The generosity of the American people has improved and saved lives, stemmed the spread of HIV/AIDS, and provided medicine, hospitals, and clinics to those who are infected.

Together, PEPFAR and the Global Fund have built health care systems where none existed before and allowed individuals infected with HIV/AIDS to dream of a future.

These programs also ensure that the countries we are working in play a part in helping their own people survive and thrive.

While we have made significant progress in combating HIV/AIDS, we cannot be complacent.

Here in the Nation's Capital, the AIDS rate is higher than in some Sub-Saharan African countries, and infection rates are even growing in some demographics.

In Illinois, 37,000 individuals are living with AIDS, with 80 percent of them residing in Chicago.

Internationally, the gains that we have made could easily be lost; the increase of infections in Southeast Asia, Russia, and the Ukraine—places that have historically had low infection rates is alarming.

If we lose our focus or if international donors stop contributing to key programs, we lose out on the momentum built in recent years to combat this disease.

That is why it is good that this administration continues to push for an AIDS-free generation.

Secretary Clinton announced three new efforts during this week's conference: \$15 million in implementation research to identify specific interventions, \$20 million for a challenge fund

to support country-led efforts to expand services, and \$2 million through the Robert Carr Civil Society Network Fund to bolster civil society groups.

Secretary Clinton also noted: "Creating an AIDS-free generation takes more than the right tools, as important as they are. Ultimately, it's about people—the people who have the most to contribute to this goal and the most to gain from it." She is right.

Creating an AIDS-free generation is about working together to help save and improve lives. It is about supporting the individuals and communities that have already made great inroads in addressing this epidemic.

By reaffirming our leadership to initiatives such as PEPFAR and the Global Fund, which support these individuals and communities, we can continue to make a difference. Only then can we truly wish to usher in an AIDS-free generation.

OUR SHARED COMMITMENT TO FIGHT HIV/AIDS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to discuss the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the tremendous progress we have made thus far, and the need to do even more if we are going to stop this devastating disease in its tracks.

The fight against HIV/AIDS has been a long one. In more than 30 years, approximately 26 million people have died from AIDS, and there are still an astounding 7,000 new infections every day. But our commitment to combating this disease is making important strides.

In the past decade, new HIV infections fell 20 percent, thanks in large part to the lifesaving antiretroviral treatment we and our partners are making available in every corner of the world that AIDS touches.

We know that relatively healthy people with HIV who receive early treatment with antiretroviral drugs are 96 percent less likely to pass on the virus to their uninfected partners. So treating these individuals not only allows them to live their lives in dignity but is also an important key to prevention.

In my home State of Maryland, the Jhpiego program has spent decades addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South America, Africa, Europe and Asia. Jhpiego has made enormous strides in prevention of mother-to-child transmission, increasing counseling and testing and providing greater access to antiretroviral drugs.

Jhpiego has integrated HIV/AIDS services with tuberculosis, cervical cancer, malaria in pregnancy, family planning and maternal and child health services, to address the problem of co-infection among HIV/AIDS patients and to reach as many people as possible. These integrated services represent the future of our health assistance. We have learned from programs like Jhpiego's what our best practices should be so that we are innovators in prevention, care, and treatment.

I am pleased that Jhpiego and groups like it from across the globe are coming together for this week's AIDS 2012 conference in Washington, DC. This conference is the largest gathering of professionals working in the field of HIV in the world and will bring together more than 20,000 people from more than 120 countries all working together to create a blueprint for combating HIV/AIDS. I can only imagine the exciting new synergies that will develop when so many innovative, committed individuals are in the same room.

Among the presenters are luminaries from the public, private, and multilateral sectors such as President Bill Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and former U.S. First Lady Laura Bush, Her Highness Mette-Marit, Crown Princess of Norway, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé, Sir Elton John, Whoopi Goldberg, and Bill Gates.

This is the first time the United States has hosted the conference in two decades, and I believe it is the right moment for us to be showcasing our strong bipartisan effort to bring the AIDS epidemic to an end.

The United States has long been a leader in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Development Assistance, I am proud to note that from 2004 to 2010 the United States spent more than \$26 billion on bilateral funding to fight AIDS. From my experience leading this subcommittee, I know that dedicated government experts from an array of U.S. agencies are involved in the fight, as are thousands of nonprofits and community organizations.

Yet despite the progress that the numbers and statistics tell us, the story on the ground is still heartbreaking, and now is not the time to rest on our laurels. International anti-AIDS funding has not increased significantly since 2008. In places like the Congo, for example, doctors are only able to supply antiretroviral drugs to 15 percent of the people who need them. Globally, just 8 million of the 15 million treatment-eligible patients in AIDS-ravaged poor regions of the world are getting antiretroviral drugs.

We must do better. We must do better to improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS, and we must do better to save the lives of their loved ones.

Some experts believe that "fatigue and forgetting" are two of the reasons we have not reached more people. Though we have been working on treating this disease for decades, we still have an overwhelming number of infections to treat.

But the good news is that scientists now believe we have the tools to make serious progress in the fight against AIDS. Scientific advances over the last year have been remarkable, and we can't afford to abandon the fight and to lose momentum now.

In a recent Washington Post article, Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS, said, "The previous generation fought for treatment, our generation must fight for a cure."

I am proud that in just the last year, the National Institutes of Health has increased spending on cure-related research by \$56 million. This is a step in the right direction, and I want to see us do more. I stand with the entire HIV/AIDS medical community in renewing the call to prevent, treat, and cure HIV/AIDS. Let's use the opportunity of this historic gathering to renew our call to work on creating an AIDS-free generation.

2012 OLYMPICS GAMES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, tomorrow evening, hundreds of athletes from across the world will gather in London for the opening ceremonies of the 2012 Summer Olympic games.

Among those marching in the Parade of Nations will be 20 athletes from Illinois.

Making his Olympic debut in the 100-meter butterfly is Tyler McGill, a native of Champaign. After turning in the second-fastest time in the world this year at the U.S. Olympic trials, Tyler will be swimming for a spot at the top of the podium in London.

Lake Forest native and Northwestern Wildcat Matt Grevers is already an Olympic Gold-medalist as a member of the two winning relay teams in Beijing. This year, he'll be swimming for individual Gold—and maybe a world record—in the 100-meter backstroke.

As the son of an All-American, swimming is in Conor Dwyer's blood. After achieving personal bests in every event in which he competed at the trials, the Winnetka native will compete in the 400-meter freestyle as well as a relay at his first Olympic games.

Star diver Christina Loukas was born in Riverwoods, where she began swimming and diving at an early age. Although she moved away from Illinois after high school, Christina remained a Cubs fan and returns to Chicago often.

Chatham's Kelci Bryant will join Christina on the women's diving team as she competes in the 3-meter synchronized diving event. Already a two-time NCAA champion, this will also be Kelci's second Olympics.

Algonquin runner Evan Jager won four Illinois State titles in cross-country and track, but he will be competing in a relatively new sport for him—the steeplechase—at this year's Olympics. He qualified for the team after just a few years training for the grueling event.

Chicago's track and field star Wallace Spearmon, Jr., will be looking for vindication this year in the men's 200-meters—a high-pressured sprint that will include many of the fastest runners of all time.

Dawn Harper, who hails from my own hometown of East St. Louis, will be de-

fending her 2008 Olympic Gold Medal in the 100-meter hurdles in London. She won in Beijing in a thrilling upset and with a personal best time, making her the one to beat in this year's games.

Member of the Fighting Illini and All-American Gia Lewis-Smith made her first international team in 2011 after competing in the discus for 11 years. She remained in Champaign after graduating, where she not only trains but also volunteers at the nearby YWCA and with Parkland Community College.

Competing in the men's discus event will be Lance Brooks, a New Berlin high school graduate who attended Decatur's Millikin University, where he played for the men's basketball team.

Growing up in Itasca, Sarah Zelenka tried swimming, soccer, volleyball, and basketball. But it wasn't until she went to college that this naturally gifted athlete found her sport: rowing. She has since won gold at the Rowing World Cup and World Championships and will be looking to add an Olympic medal to that collection in London.

Rowing twins Grant and Ross James have competed next to each other their entire lives and share their biggest fan—their mom. After Ross captured the final seat on the eight-man boat going to London, the twins learned that they had fulfilled their lifelong dream of competing next to each other at the Olympics.

At 6 feet 9 inches, Sean Rooney is a natural for the sport of volleyball. He was named Illinois' Player of the Year in 2001 when he led his high school team, Wheaton-Warrenville South, to an Illinois State championship. He competed in his first Olympics in Beijing, where he helped Team USA to a gold medal. He will help them defend that title this year.

Bob Willis grew up in Chicago and learned to sail on beautiful Lake Michigan. After qualifying for the Olympic games, he returned briefly to Chicago before leaving for London, where "the first water [his] Olympic board touched was Lake Michigan water."

Greco-Roman wrestler Ellis Coleman grew up in Chicago's Humboldt Park and joined the wrestling team as a way to stay out of trouble in a rough neighborhood. His signature move is an impressive leap called the Flying Squirrel, which he may employ as he wrestles to win Olympic Gold this year in London.

Growing up in Naperville, Candace Parker was a devoted Chicago Bulls fan. So it wasn't surprising when she began to play basketball herself, leading her high school team to multiple Illinois State championships and becoming the first female high school player to dunk a basketball in a sanctioned game. She has been a member of the USA Basketball Women's National Team since 2009 and helped win Gold for the United States at the Beijing Olympics.

Swin Cash will join her on the women's basketball team. Swin was drafted