

STOP TB USA* - ADVOCACY UPDATE!

* Formerly known as the U.S. National Coalition for Elimination of Tuberculosis (NCET).

Congress continues in session. Congress has not yet passed the TB budget this year but in late September Congress adopted HJ Res 52, providing continuing appropriations for federal agencies into fiscal year 2008. The continuing resolution (CR) is necessary because FY 2008 appropriations bills have not been completed, and the new fiscal year began on October 1. The CR maintains funding for federal agencies, including CDC and TB at FY 2007 levels through November 16. The House adopted HJ Res 52 on a vote of 404-14 on Wednesday, September 26. The Senate voted to pass the CR on Thursday, September 27 on a vote of 94-1. The President signed the CR into law.

STOP TB USA partners, particularly the American Thoracic Society, RESULTS, the American Lung Association, and the National TB Controllers Association have been very active this year is supporting proposed new domestic and global TB-related authorization bills and in educating legislators about the need for increased appropriations globally and domestically for TB prevention and control and for the development of new tools.

Below are important updated alert opportunities from our partners that we have been asked to pass on to you. You will continue to hear from us and our STOP TB USA partners in the near future about urgent opportunities to support the new domestic and global TB authorizations bills as well as to take advantage of educational opportunities to support increase funding for TB here and abroad.

AMERICAN THORACIC SOCIETY ASKING FOR HELP IN SUPPORT OF DOMESTIC LEGISLATION

Action Requested: Contact Your Senators to Urge Support for Domestic TB Legislation. For maximum effectiveness, please contact your Senators by October 17th.

The Senate Domestic TB control bill, the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551, sponsored by Sens. Brown (D-OH), Hutchison (R-TX) and Kennedy (D-MA), is advancing in the Senate. The bill is due to be considered by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee in September. All ATS members and friends are urged to contact their two Senators to request their cosponsorship of the bill to ensure that it passes through the Senate HELP Committee and proceeds to a Senate floor vote. The following is a list of the members of the Senate HELP Committee. If your Senator is on this list, please make a special effort to contact them to request that they support a HELP Committee vote on the bill as soon as possible. Names in bold indicate Senators that are already bill cosponsors, so please thank these Senators for their support and urge them to push the bill to a Senate floor vote.

Members of the Senate Health, Ed., Labor and Pensions Committee

Democrats

Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Chair

Chris Dodd (D-CT)

Tom Harkin (D-IA)

Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)

Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)

Patty Murray (D-WA)

Jack Reed (D-RI)

Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)

Barack Obama (D-IL)

Republicans

Michael Enzi (R-WY), Rnk. Mem.

Judd Gregg (R-NH)

Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

Richard Burr (R-NC)

Johnny Isakson (R-GA)

Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

Orrin Hatch (R-UT)

Pat Roberts (R-KS)

Wayne Allard (R-CO)

Sherrod Brown (D-OH-bill sponsor)

Tom Coburn (R-OK)

Independent - Bernard Sanders

How to Take Action

Contact your Senators today to urge them to cosponsor the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551 and urge the HELP Committee to consider the bill as soon as possible. Call the Capitol Switchboard at 1-202-224-3121 and ask for your Senator or give your state if you do not know their name. When you are connected to an office, ask for the Health Legislative Assistant. If you leave a voicemail message, include your name and phone number so that they can call you back.

The following is a sample phone message: "I am a constituent and a healthcare provider from (your town) and I am calling to ask Sen. ___ to cosponsor the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551, and urge that the Senate HELP Committee vote on the bill as soon as possible. The bill must be passed this year to strengthen domestic TB control efforts to prevent outbreaks of drug resistant TB and expand research to find easier, more effective TB diagnostics, drugs and vaccines."

Click on the following link to e-mail your Representative if you are unable to make a phone call:

<http://www.thoracic.org/sections/about-ats/advocacy/take-action-now.html>

Other Talking Points:

- TB is the one of the leading infectious disease killers in the world, taking over 1.6 million lives per year.
- Ten to 14 million people in the U.S. are infected with latent tuberculosis.
- The current funding level for CDC's Division of TB Elimination represents a 33% decrease over the past decade when adjusted for inflation.
- New tools are needed to more effectively prevent, diagnose, and treat TB. The standard method of diagnosing TB is over 100 years old and fails to adequately detect TB in children and those co-infected with HIV/AIDS. The newest class of TB drugs is over 40 years old and is inadequate for combating drug resistant TB.
- Passage of S. 1551 is needed to combat the global health threat of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) TB, a virtually untreatable, and highly fatal strain of drug-resistant TB.

Summary of the House Domestic TB Bill: the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551/H.R. 1532

The bill, sponsored by Reps. Green (D-TX), Wilson (R-NM) & Baldwin (D-WI) and Sens. Brown (D-OH), Hutchison (R-TX) and Kennedy (D-MA) will increase funds for the CDC's National Program

for the Elimination of Tuberculosis and state TB control programs, and expand research on TB diagnostic and treatment tools at the NIH and CDC. The bill will also:

- Authorize and expand CDC demonstration activities on TB elimination, including targeted efforts to prevent, detect and treat the disease among African Americans and foreign-born persons in the U.S.
- Expand research, including study of the relationship between TB and HIV/AIDS, and research training programs at the NIH Authorize funding for the “Blueprint Plan for TB Vaccine Development”

Sample letter:

As a constituent and health provider in your district, I am contacting you to urge you to help eliminate tuberculosis (TB) in the U.S. by cosponsoring the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, H.R. 1532, sponsored by Reps. Green (D-TX), Wilson (R-NM) and Baldwin (D-WI).

In the U.S., many people think TB is a disease of the past, however, the recent incident involving an extensively drug resistant (XDR) TB patient in the U.S. reminds us that we face new challenge in controlling this disease. Drug-resistant strains of TB are spreading globally, raising concerns of a future epidemic of virtually untreatable TB.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), although the overall rate of new TB cases is declining in the U.S., the annual rate of decrease in TB cases has slowed significantly, from about 7.1 percent (1993 to 2000) to 3.8 percent currently. This rate represents one of the smallest declines since the devastating resurgence of TB between 1985 and 1992, when over \$1 billion was expended in New York City alone to regain control of TB.

New tools are needed to more effectively prevent, diagnose, and treat TB. The standard method of diagnosing TB is over 100 years old and fails to adequately detect TB in children and those co-infected with HIV/AIDS. The newest class of anti-TB drugs is over 40 years old, while the rate of multi-drug resistance is rising.

The U.S. stands on the brink of being able to eliminate TB in the U.S. and the first step in reaching this goal is enactment of the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, H.R.1532. The bill will provide increased funding for the CDC’s National Program for the Elimination of Tuberculosis. It will expand research on TB diagnostic and treatment tools at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and CDC, and authorize the “Blueprint Plan for TB Vaccine Development” at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

RESULTS: TB SCOURGE WILL MEET ITS MATCH WITH ACTION ON TB BILLS

Urge Senators to Lead on Halting TB Globally and Domestically by Cosponsoring Pending Legislation - Progress has been made in the House on passing legislation that will demonstrate U.S. commitment toward addressing the TB scourge that kills 1.6 million people each year, and that recently alarmed us when Andrew Speaker traveled with deadly multi-drug TB. The House Foreign Affairs Committee passed H.R.1567, the Stop TB Now Act of 2007, and it will go to the floor of the House some time this fall. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee must now consider their version of the Stop TB Now Act of 2007 (S.968), and both chambers must consider the companion domestic bills (H.R.1532 and S.1551).

Take Action Now at: <http://capwiz.com/results/home/>

**RESULTS: AMMENDMENT TO FOREIGN AID SPENBDING BILL ADDS
ADDITIONAL \$90 MILLION IN TB FUNDING**

RESULTS praises the Senate for passing an amendment to the 2008 foreign aid funding bill that will provide an additional \$90 million to fight tuberculosis worldwide. The amendment, introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Sam Brownback (R-KS), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Gordon Smith (R-OR), will bring total bilateral TB appropriations to \$200 million.

This amendment will provide critical funds needed to fight TB, including dangerous drug-resistant forms of the disease which threaten to roll back our progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Tuberculosis is the greatest curable infectious killer in the world. Every 20 seconds, someone dies of TB. The disease claims 1.6 million lives each year. The fight against TB is closely tied with the fight against AIDS, because TB is the number one killer of people living with HIV/AIDS. Yet resources devoted to TB are a tiny fraction of those devoted to high-profile diseases such as AIDS and avian flu, and the majority of those living with AIDS are not being screened for TB.
