Mailbox

February 1, 2005

Electile Dysfunction

As an Australian, I want to thank Sean Strub for taking a strong stand about voting in America's elections ("Founder's Letter," November 2004). Like Sean, all of my American friends are scared of a second Dubya term—and many have contingency plans to move internationally if necessary. I care passionately about what happens in the U.S.A. because so much of what happens there ends up here, and so much of our health care, unfortunately, depends on medicines that come from your country. It's frustrating to watch the government flush so much of the progress regarding HIV down the toilet. And it's a crying shame that Dubya ended up in charge again. Your help was a step in the right direction.

Stu Annels
Sydney

Who's Better for People With HIV?" ("POZ Election Special," November 2004) was so biased and dishonest I thought I was reading something written by Michael Moore. President Bush has proposed more funding for AIDS treatment and research than any other president in history. Last year, Congress approved funding for $2.4 billion of the $15 billion Bush proposed to spend internationally. His administration also approved changes in Medicaid that have added coverage for 2.6 million people.

True, it's not as much funding as we might have liked, but it shows that this administration is heading in the right direction. Personally, I'd rather stick with this president and continue to petition him and our representatives in Congress for increased government funding of HIV research and treatment. John Kerry made promises that he hoped would get him elected, but he showed no plan to accomplish these goals or pay for them.

Mack L. Hampton
Ashland, Kentucky

You put together an informative, compelling and accurate issue about the life-and-death stakes in this year's election. We have fought too hard for a place at the table to ignore one of the most important rights and decisions we have as HIVers—the right to vote. We also have plenty of legitimate demands for our nation's leaders—which unfortunately, have been ignored for too long.

POZ should continue motivating readers toward AIDS advocacy every month. Doing so only during the election season is too little too late.

David Ernesto Munar
Associate Director of Policy
AIDS Foundation of Chicago

I'm very worried about the election outcome. While Kerry might not have been an ideal selection, he would have created a White House friendlier to HIVers and those in need of prevention. The Bush administration could ultimately cut funding for essential HIV services, such as housing and Medicaid, as you mentioned in your election coverage. Additionally, supporting abstinence-only education for our youth and the prevention "ABCs" ("Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condoms") for adults is unreasonable. These ineffective mandates will only contribute to our existing culture of fear around sexuality and reproductive health.

Mark D. Miller
Philadelphia

I will not dis Mr. Bush. It is wasted energy. I pray for HIVers and continue to fight for financial support for AIDS. Like many, I am sad to go back to the drawing board. But by being active rather than reactive, I can help PWAs retain needed programs. I want to challenge the president to dedicate himself to helping those with AIDS. He needs to show that he is not all talk. Put out or shut up.

Michael Barry
East Orlando, Florida

STUDY BUDDY

I am one of the "elite controllers"—an HIVer who has never manifested a symptom, never taken an HIV medication and never registered a viral load—mentioned in "Meet Your Host" (November 2004). I'm constantly searching for studies about long-term non-progressors. Just last spring, I asked my physician to find a study for me within his Stanford-based medical community—to no avail. But then, with wide-eyed excitement and tears streaming down my face, I read your article introducing me to Boston's Bruce Walker, MD, and his research study. I have since connected with Florencia Pereyra, MD, to begin the process and send blood samples. There are no words to express how grateful I am to you.

Loreen Willenberg
Somerset, California

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