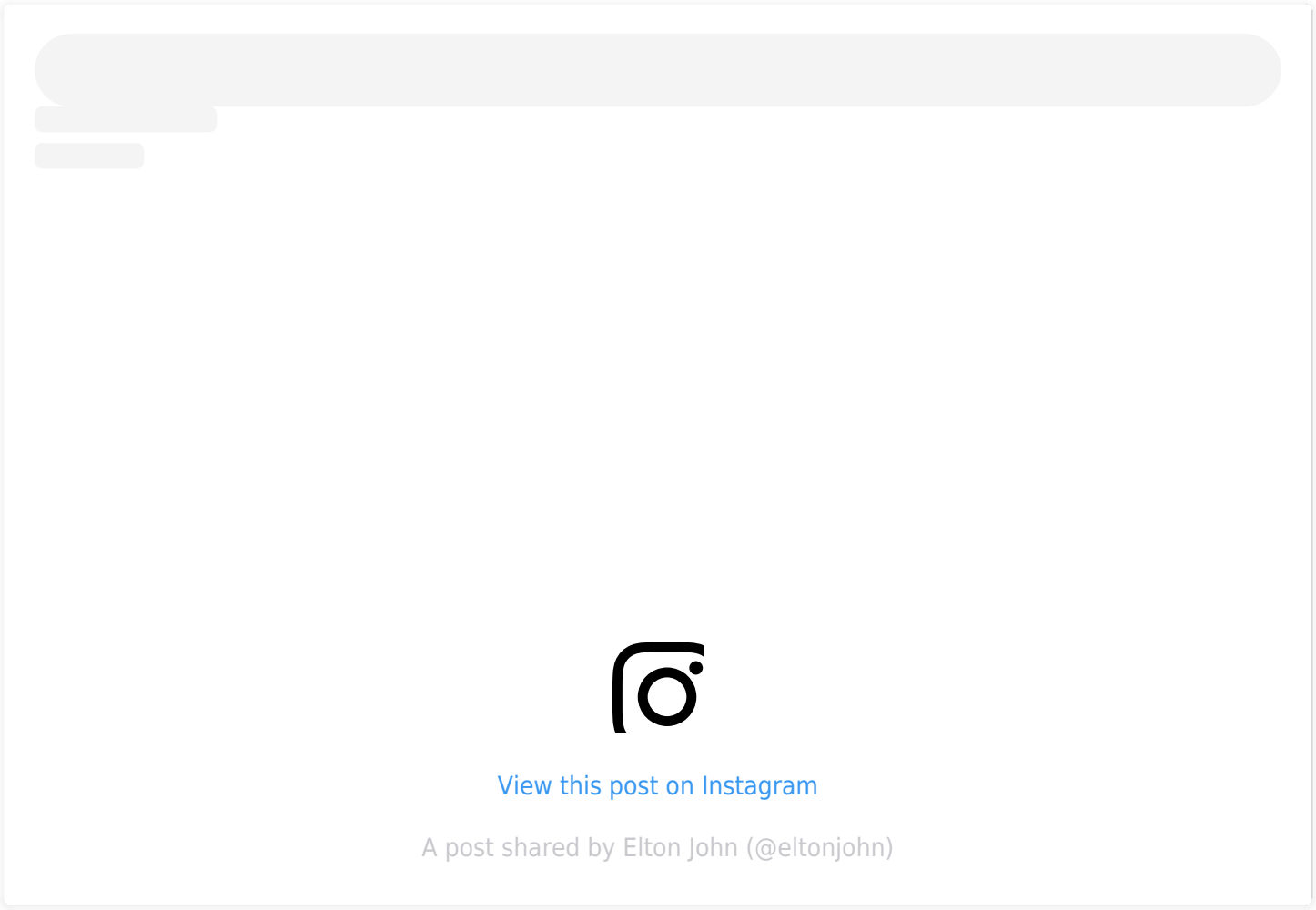
Elton John and Lil Nas X Reign as Rock Stars of HIV Fundraisers

In its 30th year, Elton John's Oscar viewing party raised $8.6 million. Plus: Lil Nas X and Gilead fight HIV in the South.

April 4, 2022 By Trent Straube

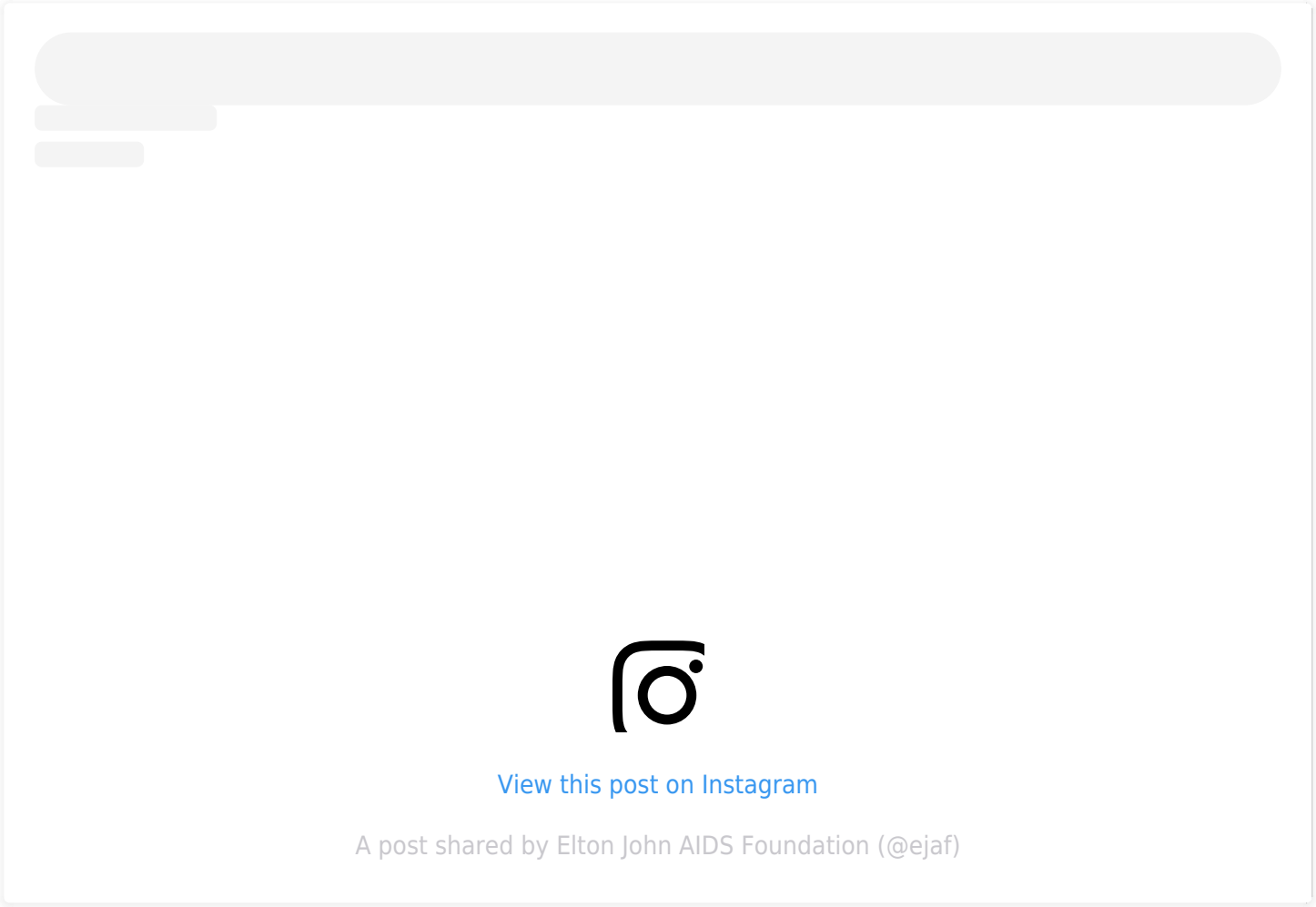
Here's some feel-good news from this year's Academy Awards: Elton John's 30th annual viewing party in Los Angeles raised a record-breaking $8.6 million to fight HIV. Since the gala launched in 1992, it has raised a total of $86 million to support the Elton John AIDS Foundation's efforts to end HIV, according to a press statement from the global organization.



Lady Gaga, Billy Porter and Erick McCormack cohosted the event with David Furnish, John's

husband and chairman of the foundation, while Brandi Carlile and Jake Wesley Rogers performed live.

The Rocket Man himself, Elton John, joined via satellite live from Lincoln, Nebraska, where he was performing as part of his Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour.



As an added treat, guests got to rock Limited Edition Elton John Eyewear “GOLD DUST” frames sold exclusively at Walmart in partnership with Elton John AIDS Foundation. Naturally, everyone wore the frames alongside Elton during his live-streamed performance—and later posed for the camera.

“Even though Elton was not able to be with us in person, we were so happy to bring Elton to the Oscar Party while he performed live from Nebraska,” said Furnish in the statement. “It was an especially unforgettable and emotional evening with our sons in attendance for the first time. They made their fathers extremely proud representing our family at the Foundation’s most important night of the year!”



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Elton John (@eltonjohn)

“I’m so grateful to my friends Lady Gaga, Billy Porter and Eric McCormack for joining David in hosting such an incredible evening and, of course, Brandi Carlile for bringing down the house with an electrifying performance,” added John. “Most of all, I’m thankful to all who attended and participated to ensure that we can continue our lifesaving work to end AIDS. I could feel the love and support all the way from Lincoln, Nebraska!”



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A post shared by Elton John AIDS Foundation (@ejaf)

In other HIV fundraising news, rap star Lil Nas X has raised nearly $500,000 to support community organizations addressing HIV in the South through Gilead Science's COMPASS Initiative, according to a press release from the drugmaker Gilead.

The money was raised through Lil Nas's baby registry for his debut album, Montero, which dropped last fall. As we reported in September, the registry invited fans to donate to nonprofits fighting HIV in the South; each song on the album was associated with a different group.

We're grateful to rapper Lil Nas X for his support of the Gilead COMPASS Initiative and for his advocating for #HIV awareness and education. His recent efforts helped raise $500,000 for organizations working to address the HIV epidemic in the Southern U.S. https://t.co/C4cnZWa2sd pic.twitter.com/6yInIvfwZv

— Gilead Sciences (@GileadSciences) March 30, 2022

Launched in 2017, Gilead's COMPASS Initiative (the name stands for "COMmitment to Partnership in Addressing HIV/AIDS in Southern States") has "helped more than 200,000 people access quality health care and other HIV services and trained 10,000 people to build organizational capacity and become HIV leaders and advocates," according to the press statement. "Last year, in its fourth round of funding, COMPASS awarded 29 organizations $2,875,000 as 2021 Transformative Grant Partners working to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Southern United States."

"I'm so thankful to everybody who donated to my baby registry and joined me in helping to transform all of these communities in the South," said Lil Nas X. "Together we are giving much-needed resources to those who need it most—especially those impacted by HIV—and also helping inspire the leaders who are constantly fighting for HIV education and awareness."

"Donations from the Montero baby registry will have a direct impact on communities affected by HIV, and we're deeply thankful for Lil Nas X and his sustained advocacy for HIV awareness and

education," said Shanell L. McGoy, MPH, PhD, director of public affairs and corporate giving at Gilead. "The Gilead COMPASS Initiative is committed to supporting the work of community-based organizations working around the clock to address HIV-related stigma, increase access to resources that support wellness and encourage leadership and advocacy across the Southern United States. The baby registry donations are a welcomed and added boost for our grantees."

????Now Open! ????Transformative Grants provide Southern-based organizations up to $100,000 to support programs & activities focused on: Capacity Building; Trauma-Informed Care, Substance Use, & Telehealth; Faith-Based Advocacy; & HIV Stigma Reduction. https://t.co/WllQIeIA6u pic.twitter.com/uBaI1XTahI

— Gilead COMPASS Initiative (@BeOurCOMPASS) April 4, 2022

In related news, see "How Lil Nas X Boosts Morale and Raises HIV Funds," which highlights his visits to several HIV nonprofits.

And click #Elton John and #Elton John AIDS Foundation to read collections of articles about those hot topics.

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