Faith Groups Call on the White House to Release Congress-Approved HIV Funds

"These funds are urgently needed now," reads a plea to budget adviser Russell Vought, who is withholding billions in global HIV funding.

July 15, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Five faith-based organizations are urging the White House to release funds already approved by Congress for international HIV and AIDS prevention, reports The Hill. The funds would support programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the HIV program that has saved an estimated 26 million lives abroad since its launch in 2003, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

"These funds are urgently needed now. Without them, children will die of preventable diseases, HIV-positive mothers will infect their babies during childbirth, tuberculosis will spread: these are the 'least of these' to whom our Lord calls us to respond," the groups wrote in a letter sent to Russell Vought, the director of the Office of Management and Budget. One of President Trump's main advisers and an architect of the ultraconservative Project 2025 blueprint to remake America, Vought wields much power over the nation's budget and is widely viewed as responsible for the massive funding cuts to foreign aid and health programs.

The letter was signed by Bread for the World, the Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology, Mormon Women for Ethical Government, the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Latino Evangelical Coalition.

PEPFAR has saved over 26 million lives and enabled 7.8 million babies to be born without HIV since its launch by President George W. Bush in 2003. The program provides funding for HIV prevention and treatment in low-income countries and until recently had bipartisan support.

Funding for PEPFAR was on the chopping block in 2025 as part of President Trump's recission package. The White House proposed to cancel $9 billion in funds already approved by Congress.

Lawmakers salvaged $400 million for PEPFAR, but funding was still slashed. Congress had apportioned $6 billion for PEPFAR for the 2025 fiscal year. However, Vought distributed only $2.9 million. Read "Congress Restores $400M for Global AIDS Program PEPFAR, but Its Future Remains in Doubt," for more details on 2025 PEPFAR budget cuts.

The faith groups also sent the letter to Senate leaders, urging them to fund the same HIV treatment and prevention programs for the next fiscal year, but the future of PEPFAR is unknown.

Check out "Activists Arrested Protesting Secretary Rubio's New Attacks on Lifesaving Global AIDS and Health Programs" or "AIDS Activists Arrested in DC Protesting the White House for Blocking $977M in HIV Funding" to learn more about previous protests.

For related news, click #PEPFAR, where you will find stories such as:

- "In a First, U.S. Votes Against U.N. Declaration on HIV/AIDS,"
- "Why the Trump White House Will Stop Funding HIV Programs in South Africa,"
- "Trump Promised We'd Defeat AIDS. Now He's Cutting HIV Services. What Happened?" and
- "Surprising Data on the 2025 Impact of Global HIV Program PEPFAR."

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