



LAC Commemorates World AIDS Day 2025 and Condemns the Federal Government's Decision to End Formal Recognition of This Critical Day

As communities around the world pause to commemorate World AIDS Day—a global observance held annually since 1988—Legal Action Center (LAC) reaffirms its unwavering commitment to enforcing and expanding the legal rights of people living with HIV.

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This day has long served as a vital moment to honor the lives lost, support people currently living with HIV/AIDS, acknowledge the tremendous progress achieved over the past four decades, and confront the significant work that remains to end the epidemic.

LAC strongly condemns the federal government's decision to halt formal commemoration of World AIDS Day this year. This deeply troubling choice comes on the heels of the administration's devastating cuts to HIV/AIDS funding, both domestically and internationally, which have disrupted treatment and prevention efforts, fueled needless human suffering, and jeopardized decades of progress.

Although remarkable strides in prevention and treatment have transformed the HIV/AIDS response, the epidemic is far from over, and the government's actions risk resurgence of this preventable disease. In 2024, nearly 107,000 New Yorkers were living with HIV, alongside an estimated 1.1 million people across the United States and 40.8 million people globally. Sustained commitment—both symbolic and substantive—is essential to safeguarding the health, privacy, and civil rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and to advancing the work needed to end the epidemic.

Discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS still exists and causes harm, as evidenced by our [recent lawsuit](#) against Buffalo State for expelling and evicting our client due to her HIV status. A core pillar of LAC's mission is to protect and defend the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, ensuring equitable access to health care, housing, employment, and other opportunities, free from stigma and discrimination. "Failure to formally recognize World AIDS Day abandons both history and public health and undermines vital efforts to respond effectively to HIV," says Paul N. Samuels, LAC's Director and President. "We cannot afford symbolic or financial retreats from the HIV response. The federal government should be strengthening—not abandoning—its

commitments. The incredible progress made since the height of the epidemic depends on sustained leadership and investment.”

Gabrielle de la Guéronnière, LAC’s Vice President of Health and Justice Policy, adds, “Communities cannot shoulder this responsibility alone. Without strong, sustained federal commitment, including continued recognition of World AIDS Day, we risk reversing years of hard-won gains and placing even greater strain on public health systems. On this World AIDS Day, LAC stands proudly with people with HIV/AIDS, communities, advocates, and service providers across the country and around the world. And we remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV/AIDS and to advancing the collective efforts needed to end the epidemic once and for all.”

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