Bill Clinton’s Real AIDS Legacy

February 11, 2014 By Sean Strub

Last week, Salon.com published an excerpt from my book, Body Counts: A Memoir of Politics, Sex, AIDS, and Survival that documents how poorly Bill Clinton’s administration responded to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly their failure to lift the ban on federal funding for needle exchange programs.

The piece has provoked more than 60 comments, but not a single one is substantively supportive of what I wrote. The vast majority of the comments are generic Clinton defenders or haters. The defenders cite his support for LGBT rights -- and dismiss, ignore or defend his egregious support of the Defense of Marriage Act and Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. And the haters just hate everything about him, as they always have.

What I wrote in Body Counts and what Salon.com excerpted was the truth -- but are there so few who remember it? And why is it that in 2014 the question of a President’s record on AIDS is immediately conflated with his record on LGBT issues?

It seems like the truth about the epidemic’s history is getting glossed over everywhere, rewritten or ignored. Maybe it is true that there aren’t so many people who really know the Clinton administration’s record on AIDS. But that makes it all the more incumbent upon them to share what they witnessed. Silence still = Death.

To read and comment on the piece published on Salon.com, please click here.

--

Please visit Body Counts at www.SeanStrub.com, on Facebook.com/BodyCounts and on Twitter @BodyCountsBook.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.