HIV Groups Demand: No Supreme Court Confirmation Until Inauguration

Plus two other asks that will address the urgent public health and racial justice challenges of 2020.

October 23, 2020 By AIDS United

The following is from AIDS United's Public Policy Council:

2020 has been a year characterized by chaos and hardship that is all too familiar to those in the HIV community. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly every aspect of our day-to-day lives has been upended as the federal government fails to promptly and adequately address the spread of COVID-19. The failures persist to this day and have directly led to more than 220,000 deaths, tens of millions of lost jobs, and a dangerously stressed American public health system that is grossly underfunded and disastrously mismanaged by appointees who place partisan politics over the lives of communities they're supposed to serve. There is no clear end in sight.

We also have seen an acceleration of anti-democratic action in both federal and state governments as mail-in voting, access to ballot drop boxes, and polling places for marginalized groups have come under attack in anticipation of the upcoming election. At the same time, we have witnessed a momentous rebellion against the persistently racist violence perpetrated by law enforcement against Black people in countless American cities after the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and too many others.

However, even by the chaotic standards of 2020, the last few weeks are particularly jarring in their turbulence and capacity to inflict lasting harm on the health and well-being of Americans who already bear the brunt of this nation's oppression, particularly Black, Brown, and Indigenous people and cisgender and transgender women.

On September 18, the honorable Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died at the age of 87 after more than a quarter century of service on the U.S. Supreme Court. Her passing—coupled with the chaos resulting from the current administration's failures with the federal response to COVID-19 and the president's refusal to denounce white supremacy—leaves people living with HIV in a precarious position. All of the gains that the HIV community and our allies in the disability and health rights movements have fought for are in jeopardy of being wiped away, including the future of the Affordable Care Act and comprehensive reproductive health services. But we will not let the

welfare and lives of millions of Americans be cast aside. We expect every elected official who wants to join us to end the HIV epidemic and other health crises that destroy lives and families.

In the nearly 40 years since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first documented the earliest identified cases of HIV in the United States, HIV advocates have taken both to the streets and to the halls of power to protest unjust policies and priorities that have led to neglect and, in many cases, the death of members of our community. We have also worked hand in hand with scientists, researchers, and political appointees at all levels of the federal government to place us on a path to end the HIV epidemic in this country and to ensure that every last person living with HIV in the United States and its Territories gets the health care they deserve.

The HIV community is certainly no stranger to struggle, or to the ill effects of prejudicial, harmful or uncaring federal agencies. Our community is diverse: we are Black and Brown, Indigenous and First Nations, Latinx, LGTBQ; we are people who use drugs, sex workers, the undocumented; we live everywhere from the rural South and Puerto Rico to major cities across the U.S. While we have been historically ‘‘othered’ by those in power, we have overcome to fight for our right to health care and safety for the survival of our communities.

The HIV service and advocacy organizations on AIDS United’s Public Policy Council call on those in Congress and throughout the federal government to engage in the following actions to ensure the health of all people living with HIV, the health of all at-risk or marginalized populations, and the health of our democracy itself:

- No confirmation until inauguration: Congress must listen to their constituents and ensure the next Supreme Court justice is not confirmed until a newly elected Congress and president are sworn in. The American people have made it abundantly clear that they do not want a new Supreme Court justice to be pushed through until their will has been heard at the polls this November. If the people’s will is ignored, it is incumbent on future congresses and administrations to consider all options to restore parity to our judicial system, including the expansion of the Supreme Court.

- Stick to the science: We demand an immediate cessation of political interference within the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Food and Drug Administration. Over the last 39 years, the HIV community has learned the hard way that science, not politics, must govern our response to public health crises. The HIV community has historically worked with career, nonpartisan staff across these esteemed institutions. As the

administration continues to undermine their expertise, both the general public and the HIV community lose trust in these institutions, greatly damaging our efforts to control the HIV/AIDS and other infectious disease epidemics.

- Addressing racism & opposing white supremacy: AIDS United's Public Policy Council is committed to centralizing racial justice throughout our work and fighting to expose and undo racist systems wherever they exist. The Trump administration's recent executive order explicitly banning federally contracted agencies from discussing racial inequality and teaching cultural competency to federal employees is the antithesis of what we stand for and the work that we do. This executive order undermines any ability by the federal government to truly end the HIV epidemic, making it impossible to reach the very vulnerable and diverse populations that constitute the HIV community. We call on all members of Congress to vociferously oppose this harmful and ignorant executive order and to express support for all organizations who conduct and support anti-racism training.

As we get closer to the election, we express solidarity with the communities that members of AIDS United's Public Policy Council represent and serve. We also express a willingness to stand side by side and work closely with members of Congress who do heed this urgent call to action to ensure the survival, safety, and well-being of our communities across the United States.

Sincerely,

AIDS United's Public Policy Council

[[poll|513]]

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/hiv-groups-demand-supreme-court-confirmation-inauguration