In the Middle of an Onslaught

Holding on to my connected values and trying to protect all of my communities here and overseas.

September 25, 2020 By Matthew Rose

As an HIV advocate, I can't help but reflect on the work we've done and how the lines between domestic and global HIV advocacy have never been more blurred. Unless there is a war in the foreign policy share, issues are often overlooked. The domestic and global AIDS movement recognizes a shared struggle for a common cause with people worldwide. What happens in the US is reflected abroad. People are bound in their fight for justice and for a better life for their communities. Think about the current post office fight. The major concern is ensuring access and distribution to medication and service delivery. Fundamentally, most believe it is essential that people can access life-affirming and life-extending medications to live and pursue their best health outcomes. Now the post office, of all things, has become a battle cry on a fundamental level that we all understand.

While watching this fight play out and pushing to make things change for the better, I can't help but consider the global perspective should the same thing happen elsewhere. The government agreed to provide a national service that happens to allow life-saving and life-extending medications to be available through the mail. We are watching and experiencing the disruptions defunding the post office has already created in our lives, communities, cities, county, or states. Imagine the anxiety and frustration for those who rely on the mail to receive their medications.

The US has made promises the world over to support foreign aid programs. Just as we watch our post office institution be defunded, we find ourselves also turning a blind eye to the similar acts carried out by our country in other parts of the world. Our nation has committed to providing resources that would make a world of difference for communities abroad. However, we watch as those programs receive a fate similar to our post office.

Still, these fights have not yet been lost. This fall, we must demand that the US government keep its word and meet its obligations to our country and the global community. Our response to COVID-19 truly requires a whole of government effort. And part of that whole of government effort includes our foreign aid programs.

In a world responding to a global pandemic, it is essential to remember that no country alone can defeat this virus. We are all a part of this global sphere. Those of us in the HIV community feel a certain level of kinship with those on this novel pandemic's frontlines.

Take a moment today to make two actions.

- First, call your Congress members to let them know that we must dedicate resources to fight the AIDS pandemic as part of our COVID response. Expanding and scaling up some of the lessons we learned from HIV will allow us to battle COVID and end the AIDS pandemic. It will take $1.4 billion in COVID-19 relief funding for PEPFAR and $4 billion over the next two years for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria as part of a total $20 billion in emergency funding for global health.

You may phone the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate office you request.

- Second: We must vote. Voting is necessary to elect leaders who will support our vision.

After our votes are cast, and the November 3rd election results are announced, our work continues. Two critical pieces of engagement must occur to build political will. We must engage politicians at all levels - from the local city government to the federal level. Second, we must ensure they share in the commitment to our causes and the people we represent, live with, and love. It is now time to be accountable and do our part to bring out our community to vote.

November 3, 2020, is a day that should be marked on everyone’s calendar.

https://www.vote.org/

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