Watch Dems and GOP Talk HIV Policy and Bipartisan Support

Advocates and lawmakers spoke with AIDS United during the recent political conventions.

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Both President Donald Trump and Vice President Joe Biden have stated they want to end the HIV epidemic in the United States within the next 5 to 10 years. These commitments are both laudable and achievable. But to reach that goal, a lot needs to happen.

AIDS United hosted two conversations as the Democratic and Republican parties met to nominate Biden and Trump as their party's presidential nominee.

The first conversation, which you can watch below, was a briefing for members of the press on the policies needed to end the HIV epidemic.

The three speakers at the event were Linda Scruggs, Daniel Driffin and Jesse Milan Jr.

Scruggs is a national leader with nearly 30 years of experience working with women, men, families and youth impacted by health disparities including HIV, mental health and other chronic disease. Driffin spoke at the 2016 Democratic National Convention, the first person living with HIV to do so since 2000. He is a co-founder of THRIVE SS, a support group for gay men of color living with HIV. Milan is the president and CEO of AIDS United and was the last person living with HIV before Driffin to speak at the DNC in 2020.

When asked if it's possible to end the HIV epidemic by 2025 as Biden has pledged or 2030 as Trump has pledged, Milan said it is possible. But he said, "we have to look at the broader context about access to health care, and not only the investment in the Ryan White Program and the investment in the CDC [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], as well as the investment at the NIH [the National Institutes of Health]."

He named expanding and improving the Affordable Care Act, the Housing for People with AIDS program, future COVID-19 stimulus packages, shoring up public health infrastructure, advancing sexual health education and the decriminalization of HIV.

The second conversation was held on the first day of the GOP convention. (You can watch the video below or at the top of this article.)

AIDS United's Milan chatted with Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón, a Republican from Puerto Rico, and former Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Republican from Florida, to discuss how to maintain and enlarge bipartisan support for ending the HIV epidemic.

González-Colón said she took on the role of co-chair because there are 49,000 people living with HIV in Puerto Rico. With so many people living with HIV, ending the epidemic "goes across party lines."

She also said that in her role as resident commissioner, she lacks a vote on the floor of the House but can vote in committees. She said, "That's the reason everything I do is bipartisan. Everything I support has got to be bipartisan, because that's the only way to get things done."

González-Colón is the current co-chair of the Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus, and Ros-Lehtinen previously served as co-chair of the caucus.

AIDS United will continue to push Democratic and Republican elected officials to enact the policies that will end the HIV epidemic in the United States.

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