

"Campaign To End Hiv Travel Ban"

I urge you to support H.R. 3337 introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee in August 2007 to the House of Representatives and S. 2486 introduced by Senators John Kerry and Gordon Smith to the Senate in December 2007. The HIV Nondiscrimination in Travel and Immigration act of 2007 will remove from the Immigration and Nationality Act the provision rendering individuals having HIV inadmissible to the United States.

The "travel ban" was passed by Congress in 1993 when hysteria over HIV was at its peak, before the introduction of effective treatments. This was fueled mainly by unfounded fear of an "imported epidemic" that might sweep the country and paralyze the health care system. In protest, the International AIDS Society has refused to hold its huge biennial conference in the US until the law is changed, and the World Health Organization has called the policy a violation of human rights.

H.R. 3337 and S. 2486 correctly state that "there is no scientific evidence to support the claim that the HIV travel and immigration ban is an effective way to prevent the spread of HIV or that it provides any economic benefit by reducing costs to the public health care system." This conclusion has been endorsed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies Task Force on HIV/AIDS, which is co-chaired by former senator and majority leader Bill Frist and Senator Russell Feingold among others ("Moving Beyond the U.S. Government Policy of Inadmissibility of HIV-Infected Noncitizens," March 2007, <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/movingbeyondinadmissibility.pdf>) and many advocacy groups and professional organizations including the International AIDS Society (http://www.iasociety.org/Web/WebContent/File/ias_policy%20paper_08.pdf).

Retaining the current travel and immigration ban runs counter to public health best practices and jeopardizes the United States' critical leadership position in controlling the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. It also unduly stigmatizes and discriminates HIV-infected tourists, foreign students, prospective immigrants, and refugees from entry into the United States.

The United States is one of only 13 countries now (including Armenia, Brunei, China, Iraq, Qatar, South Korea, Libya, Moldova, Oman, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan) that maintain by law both a travel and immigration ban for persons with HIV. In a positive move, China has most recently announced that it will repeal its immigration laws that restrict people with HIV traveling to the country.

It is time for the United States to repeal the travel and immigration ban against HIV-infected non-citizens. I respectfully ask for your support and assistance in moving H.R. 3337 and S. 2486 forward by your colleagues in the House Committee of the Judiciary (Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law) and the Senate Committee of the Judiciary where the bills now reside. Please help get us one step closer to making this repeal a reality. It is the right thing to do and it is long overdue.

We have sent 150 letters to Congress so far. Please join us!

Sign this petition online at

<http://www.rallycongress.com/am>