



CONGRESSWOMAN
MAXINE WATERS
SERVING CALIFORNIA'S 43RD DISTRICT
RANKING MEMBER OF THE
FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Statement by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in honor of the 2025 Annual Conference of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

November 12, 2025

Greetings! It is my honor to welcome you to the 2025 Annual Conference of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV. I sincerely appreciate your dedication to the planning and coordination of HIV/AIDS and STD services, and I congratulate you on your theme for this year: “Resilience in Uncertain Times: Advancing HIV Science, Policy, and Community Together.”

As one of the first regions in the United States to be affected by HIV/AIDS, Los Angeles County understands deeply what resilience truly means. Since the earliest days of the epidemic in 1981, so many of you have worked tirelessly to advance HIV science, policy, and community – together.

Today, we once again find ourselves in uncertain times. As I write this, the House of Representatives just voted to pass a Republican bill to end the Republican Shutdown – the longest government shutdown in our nation’s history – without taking any meaningful steps to address the Republican Healthcare Crisis.

Donald Trump and the Republicans in Congress created this healthcare crisis and forced a government shutdown to take healthcare away from millions of Americans – including thousands living with HIV. The Republicans cut Medicaid by almost \$1 trillion last July in their One Big Ugly Bill and refused to extend Affordable Care Act tax credits, causing health costs to skyrocket for millions of American families. These cruel and heartless policies will cause 15 million Americans to lose their health insurance.

Donald Trump is also waging an all-out war on people living with HIV! President Trump's budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 tells the story. Trump cut HIV/AIDS funds across the board – for prevention, treatment, care, and research. Trump's budget eliminated funding for HIV prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – that was a one-billion-dollar program – while also slashing funds to prevent viral hepatitis, STDs, and tuberculosis. His budget cut Ryan White HIV/AIDS care and treatment funding by \$74 million and cut HIV/AIDS research at the National Institutes of Health by 36 percent. He even eliminated funding for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program, proving he does not care if people with HIV are homeless!

I have been an outspoken advocate for people living with HIV throughout my career in Congress, and I know that HIV/AIDS is one of the most important healthcare issues of our time. I created the ***Minority AIDS Initiative*** back in 1998, with the support of the Clinton administration and my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus, to address the severe and disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on African Americans and other communities of color. I worked with Franklin Raines, a Black man who served as Director of the Office of Management and Budget for President Clinton, and he found a way to finance the new initiative. I am proud that the ***Minority AIDS Initiative*** has expanded from the initial appropriation of \$156 million in Fiscal Year 1999 to more than \$400 million per year today. We cannot let them cut it now!

I won't stand for Donald Trump's war on people with HIV, and I know all of you won't either! That is why I introduced two new HIV prevention bills in the House of Representatives in September during the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS. My first bill – ***The HIV Prevention Now Act*** ([H.R. 5126](#)) – provides \$2.165 billion in Fiscal Year 2026 for the National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and Tuberculosis Prevention at the CDC. My second bill — ***The PrEP and PEP are Prevention Act*** ([H.R. 5127](#)) – requires health insurance plans to cover [PrEP](#) and [PEP](#) as preventive services, without out-of-pocket costs. [PrEP](#) and [PEP](#) are extremely effective at preventing HIV infection, and they need to be free for people who need them. I am so proud to have the support of more than 30 Members of Congress and the HIV/AIDS community for these important bills.

I am not about to stop fighting on this issue, which has guided my career. So, I am telling Donald Trump and my Republican colleagues in Congress to immediately restore Medicaid funding, extend Affordable Care Act tax credits, and fully fund HIV/AIDS programs. We must end the Republican Healthcare Crisis and restore HIV/AIDS funds forthwith, so we can save lives!

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