The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations  
2358 Rayburn Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2008

Dear Chairman Obey:

We are writing to request that you provide an appropriation of $610 million for the Minority AIDS Initiative in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2009.

According to the most recent data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, racial and ethnic minorities represent 71% of new AIDS cases and 64% of Americans living with AIDS. African Americans account for 50% of new AIDS cases, although only 12% of the population is black. Hispanics account for 19% of new AIDS cases, although only 14% of the population is Hispanic. Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders account for 1% of new AIDS cases, and American Indians/Alaska Natives account for up to 1%. Clearly, racial and ethnic minorities shoulder a disproportionate burden of HIV and AIDS.

These statistics demonstrate the tremendous importance of the Minority AIDS Initiative. This critical initiative provides funds to community-based organizations, research institutions, minority-serving colleges and universities, health care organizations, state and local health departments, and correctional institutions to help them address the HIV/AIDS epidemic within the minority populations they serve. The Minority AIDS Initiative is designed to enable organizations and providers in minority communities to improve their capacity to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate care and services. Thus, it fills gaps in prevention, treatment, surveillance, infrastructure, outreach and education across communities of color.

We urge you to provide $610 million for the Minority AIDS Initiative in fiscal year 2009. We thank you for your attention to our concerns, and we look forward to working with you to expand programs for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in minority communities throughout the United States.

Sincerely,

Maxine Waters  
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Madeleine Bordallo  
Luis Fortuno  
Donna Christensen  
Christopher Shays
Minority AIDS Initiative letter  
March 19, 2008  
List of Signers

Maxine Waters  
Madeleine Bordallo  
Donna Christensen  
Diane E. Watson  
Fortney “Pete” Stark  
James P. McGovern  
David Wu  
Jerrold Nadler  
Chaka Fattah  
Tammy Baldwin  
Barbara Lee  
Sheila Jackson-Lee  
Maurice Hinchey  
John Conyers  
Bobby L. Rush  
Albert R. Wynn  
Louise M. Slaughter  
Ruben Hinojosa  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Donald Payne  
William Jefferson  
Dale E. Kildee  
Nygia Velázquez  
Danny K. Davis  
Alcee Hastings  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Hank Johnson  
John B. Larson  
Diana DeGette  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Gwen Moore  
Raúl Grijalva  
Joe Baca  
Neil Abercrombie  
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Dennis Moore  
Anthony Weiner  
Al Green  
G. K. Butterfield  
Luis V. Gutierrez  
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Luis Fortuño  
Christopher Shays  
Doris O. Matsui  
John Lewis  
Gregory W. Meeks  
Corrine Brown  
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Charles Rangel  
Dennis Kucinich  
Robert E. Andrews  
Silvestre Reyes  
Bob Filner  
Earl Blumenauer  
Melvin L. Watt  
Elijah E. Cummings  
Edolphus Towns  
Howard L. Berman  
Henry Waxman  
George Miller  
Michael R. McNulty  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Edward Markey  
Xavier Becerra  
Keith Ellison  
Lois Capps  
Steve Cohen  
Janice Schakowsky  
Mazie K. Hirono  
Hilda L. Solis  
Michael E. Capuano  
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Betty Sutton  
Brad Miller  
Chris Van Hollen  
Kathy Castor  
Wm. Lacy Clay