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April 4, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

I am writing to you about the April 2006 report by Government Accountability Office (GAO) entitled, "Spending Requirement Presents Challenges for Allocating Prevention Funding under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief." (GAO-06-395).

I am aware that my colleague, Congressman Waxman, sent you a lengthy letter about the content of this report. However, Mr. Waxman's letter overlooks the significant defects in the study which belie the findings and policy recommendations presented by GAO.

Significant problems in the GAO report, reflecting a deeply flawed and deficient GAO review of PEPFAR funding, are outlined in my attached letter to the GAO Comptroller General. I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Souder
Chairman
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice,
Drug Policy and Human Resources
Government Reform Committee

Enclosure

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BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,
INDEPENDENT

April 4, 2006

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

I am writing to you regarding the April 2006 report by Government Accountability Office (GAO) entitled, "Spending Requirement Presents Challenges for Allocating Prevention Funding under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief." (GAO-06-395). I believe that the report omits critical information on the intended subject, resulting in an incomplete, and biased, portrait.

By conducting its review "under the Comptroller General's authority," GAO was unconstrained by Member requests in the framing of its study. This is very discouraging.

In particular, specific and pertinent areas of study requested by Members of Congress were ignored. Although highly relevant to the subject, GAO omitted Member requests such as Chairman Hyde's request for an *analysis of the effectiveness of each of the various types of prevention strategies*; and *an examination of whether abstinence-related programs, including such programs promoted by faith-based organizations, have received fair treatment and adequate attention in the procurement process, and have the capacity to implement such programs.*

The result is most troubling, and reflects a deeply flawed and deficient review of PEPFAR funding:

- GAO did not visit the countries *most recognized* for decreasing the prevalence of their AIDS infection rates - Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe;

- GAO failed to examine recent data on ABC and behavior change which has emerged from countries such as Zimbabwe and Kenya;

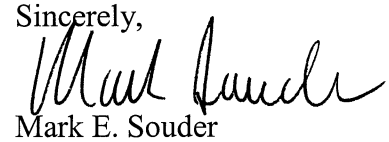
- GAO did not examine prevention programs pre-PEPFAR (primarily condoms only) and analyze their lack of impact (or failure) in generalized epidemics. This would help to explain not only why abstinence/being faithful programming (AB) is increased, but why some condom (C) programs may need to be scaled back.

That the implicit message of this report is weakness or failure of the PEPFAR law and the President's AIDS programs, *when such programs are producing measurable declines in AIDS prevalence rates in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda,* is simply bewildering, and entirely misleading.

This is not a broad or comprehensive examination of funding allocations under PEPFAR. Rather than an analysis-rich portrait, GAO has produced a data-deficient, broad-brushed and muddied image most useful to those critical of effective abstinence programs and Administration policy.

At best, this report demonstrates an incompetent GAO review; at worst it is deliberately biased.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Souder
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Drug Policy and Human Resources
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