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GAO ABSTINENCE REPORT 'AT BEST INCOMPETENT, AT WORST BIASED'

'THE PRESIDENT'S AIDS PREVENTION PROGRAMS ARE SHOWING REAL AND MEASURABLE PROGRESS,' SAYS HOUSE OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, expressed disappointment today in the Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) just-released report entitled, *Spending Requirement Presents Challenges for Allocating Prevention Funding Under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.*

"I'm very disappointed that the GAO released a report that uses incomplete data to reach premature conclusions critical of the President's AIDS prevention programs," said Souder, whose subcommittee has jurisdiction over public health issues. "At best, this report demonstrates an incompetent GAO review; at worst it's deliberately biased."

"Although the GAO report criticizes congressionally-established requirements that 20 percent of AIDS funding be spent on prevention programs, and that 33 percent of those prevention funds be spent on abstinence-until-marriage (ABC) programs, the report does not address the question of whether this strategy is providing effective results," Souder added. "The President's AIDS prevention programs are showing real and measurable progress: Uganda has reduced their HIV/AIDS infection rate from 15 to 4 percent using the ABC model. Moreover, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Senegal are seeing declines in the infection rates under this model. It's extraordinary that GAO didn't even visit these countries. I have concerns that GAO is increasingly slanting its results based on ideology—especially when one considers that this report was initiated without a Member's request—rather than the facts."

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