

## ACTION SHEET

# Write to Congress: Co-sponsor the End TB Now Act!

Tuberculosis (TB) is the second leading infectious disease killer in the world after COVID-19 and disproportionately affects impoverished and marginalized communities. TB is often thought of as a disease of the past, but unfortunately it remains a major global health threat and is a key driver of poverty.

Last year, the World Health Organization released its annual tuberculosis (TB) report, and the news was bleak. TB mortality increased in 2020 and again in 2021, up to 1.6 million deaths last year. Additionally, new cases are up for the first time in years, and over 10.5 million people fell ill in 2021. Over 98 percent of TB cases and deaths are in low- and middle-income countries. The vast majority of TB cases are curable, but in resource-poor areas treatment often comes too late.

Because of diverted resources during COVID-19, global TB deaths have risen alarmingly – even though this disease is preventable and treatable. With resources diverted to fight the pandemic, TB infections and deaths are on the rise again after a decade of decline. By nearly every measure, the TB pandemic is indeed getting worse – more people getting sick, fewer people getting treated, and more people dying.

Without a change in action, we are moving in the wrong direction on the TB pandemic, and we are way off the global TB targets set in 2018 at the United Nations General Assembly. We must do better, particularly in the run-up to the United Nations High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis slated for September. The Stop TB Partnership estimates that delaying or failing to implement the UN End TB Strategy goals will mean 43 million people developing TB, leading to 6.6 million deaths by 2030.

One way we can make a difference is strong co-sponsorship of the End Tuberculosis Now Act, open in both the Senate (S.288) and the House (H.R.1776). This bicameral, bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Todd Young (R-IN), and Representatives Ami Bera (D-CA) and Maria Salazar (R-FL), directs the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to set bold targets to reach and treat the most vulnerable populations for all forms of TB. The bill also addresses the impact COVID-19 has had on global TB control efforts.

**Take Action:** We must build a crescendo of support for weakening tuberculosis' grip on the world. Will you reach out today to your senators and representative(s) and ask for co-sponsorship of the End Tuberculosis Now Act? Read on for support in your advocacy.

## Sample Letter to your Senators and/or Foreign Policy Aide(s) in EPIC Format

Consider organizing a group outreach activity by inviting RESULTS group members, Action Network members, expansion leads, and others who care about these issues to write to your congressional legislators. You can find a [sample letter-writing meeting agenda here](#).

### **Subject: Please co-sponsor the End Tuberculosis Now Act**

**Engage:** Tuberculosis (TB) is often thought of as a disease in the history bin. Unfortunately, TB is surging again at a level we haven't seen in a long time.

**State Problem:** Around the world, TB resources were diverted toward the COVID-19 pandemic, and that put TB response at risk. Now, a World Health Organization (WHO) report states TB rates and deaths increased during 2020 and 2021.

**Inform:** We ignore this setback in the fight against TB at our peril. This disease is both a driver and an exacerbator of global poverty, and it targets vulnerable populations. But the End Tuberculosis Act (S. 288 and H.R.1776) can help change that. The bill calls for bold U.S. goals to reach those most vulnerable to the disease. It also will help the U.S. coordinate better with such entities as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

**Call to Action:** Will you co-sponsor the End Tuberculosis Act today? It will help save lives and boost the global health infrastructure needed to address future pandemics.