

Congress can shape the future of global health

For decades, the United States has been a leader in global health. Without the generosity of the American people, the world would look very different. For less than one percent of the U.S. federal budget, U.S. foreign assistance programs have helped avert millions of deaths from HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria. They have also prevented tens of millions of babies from dying from vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and pneumonia.

Bipartisan leadership created these programs and needs to make sure their impact continues. Congress must actively weigh in on the future of U.S. foreign aid through accountability efforts alongside strong support for spending. Congress must ensure the funds they've already appropriated have maximum impact.

Bipartisan leadership from Congress driving progress

Congress has played a key role in shaping U.S. humanitarian efforts since World War II. Congress also has one of the most important powers granted under the constitution — ***“the power of the purse.”*** Each year, Congress has continued to fund foreign aid in a bipartisan way — with specific direction on how those funds are spent — setting aside resources for priorities like child health, clean water, basic education, and emergency aid.

As part of this responsibility, Congress built bipartisan consensus on global health priorities, focused on the most cost-effective, highest impact approaches, increasing oversight and accountability, and sharpening the power of programming over many years. In 2023, U.S.-government supported programs helped:

- Resuscitate 238,000 newborns who were not breathing at birth
- Start 113,000 people on treatment for drug-resistant TB, a deadly, airborne disease
- Provide nearly 30 million children under 5 with quality nutrition services
- Ensure access to a safe facility for childbirth for 12 million women

These outcomes are not coincidental. They follow the policy direction and transparency mandated by Congress. They must be the minimum baseline for the future.

Charting the future of foreign assistance

After the Trump Administration dismantled foreign assistance programs in early 2025, Congress stood firm in maintaining bold bipartisan funding for global health. In September of last year, the Administration announced a new plan for international health assistance.

The “America First Global Health Strategy” focuses on some key health needs, like TB testing and treatment, polio immunization, HIV treatment, and malaria prevention. It also calls out the strategic use of pooled funding mechanisms and multilateral partnerships. But the strategy omits several other key longstanding priorities set by Congress, including maternal and child health, and proposes steep funding cuts in coming years.

The Administration has made some new commitments to deliver humanitarian aid in crisis zones and to help respond to the latest Ebola outbreak. These investments are critical, but huge needs still remain. Across many of its new proposals, the Administration is emphasizing country ownership and transition. Done right, transition can mean more countries and communities with fuller sovereignty and direction over their own health programs. Done wrong, it could risk millions of lives and squander decades of progress.

Pooled funds stretch U.S. resources, for more impact per tax dollar

The U.S. government has drastically reduced the size and scale of foreign assistance agencies, reducing the capacity to deliver bilateral programs. However, there are several partnership and turn-key platforms that can absorb additional resources quickly, and save lives while stretching the impact of US funding by bringing in other partners.

- **The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria** supports locally-led programs in over 100 countries, having saved more than 70 million lives.
- **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance** has a plan to support lifesaving vaccines for more than half a billion children around the world.
- **The Child Nutrition Fund** triples U.S. funding with a match from the private sector and partner governments, unlocking lifesaving nutrition for millions of children.

Congress must protect and direct the future of US foreign aid

Congress should work with the Administration to make effective use of existing funds, and use FY27 appropriations to make bold new investments. This includes:

- **Secure new funding and oversee spending:** Congress must exercise their constitutional authority over funds they’ve already appropriated, reject any rescissions of critical foreign aid, and set a high bar for FY2027.
- **Support pooled global funds that stretch U.S. resources:** Turn-key investments like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB & Malaria, and the Child Nutrition Fund — are even more key with U.S. programs in transition.
- **Prioritize humanitarian and development programs for the future:** TB, HIV, malaria, nutrition, maternal and child survival, basic education, and more, in line with congressional authorization and appropriation.