March 22, 2016

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
HT-2, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

Thank you for your leadership and your dedication to global health and development efforts. We write to request that you provide $400 million in funding for bilateral tuberculosis (TB) control in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill to build global capacity to stop this terrible disease.

Although usually treatable with a course of inexpensive drugs ($16–$20), TB is the leading infectious killer in the world, claiming 1.5 million lives in 2014. Worldwide, TB is a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age and an under-recognized health problem in children. In 2014, an estimated 140,000 children died from TB.

As the leading infectious killer of people with HIV/AIDS, TB is undermining the substantial gains we have made through PEPFAR. The World Health Organization estimates that people living with HIV face a risk of developing TB that is 26 to 31 times greater than that of the general population. As the Subcommittee considers maximizing the impact of our global health dollars, we urge you to protect our PEPFAR investments by supporting funding to prevent, detect and treat TB.

Antimicrobial resistant pathogens are a growing problem worldwide, and drug resistant tuberculosis is one of the most concerning, since it is airborne and very costly to treat. Caused by improper or incomplete treatment, it poses an extreme risk to patients, their families and health care personnel. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has classified drug resistant tuberculosis as a "serious" public health threat in the U.S. In December, President Obama released the National Action Plan for Combating Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis, a comprehensive plan to address drug resistant TB worldwide. This blueprint offers an important opportunity to tackle the threat of drug resistant TB. There were 480,000 multi-drug resistant tuberculosis cases in 2014. In the U.S., these cases often cost an estimated $100,000–$260,000 per patient to treat.

Scientific advances have led to progress in the development of new and better diagnostic tools that will help transform the fight against TB, but research must be accelerated to develop shorter treatment regimens and a more effective vaccine. Most TB drugs were developed more than 40 years ago and must be taken for 6–9 months. The TB vaccine, which is more than 85 years old,
provides some protection against severe forms of TB in children, but is unreliable against adult pulmonary TB, which accounts for most of the worldwide disease burden. U.S. investments can help bring technology to scale and provide continued support for new tools to fight TB.

In 2008, Congress passed into law the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act. An allocation of $400 million in FY 2017 would be consistent with this authorization and commensurate with the global burden of TB. Funding for USAID’s TB control program helps build capacity in 23 countries highly-burdened by TB and supports the development of new diagnostic and treatment tools, and is also authorized to support research to develop new vaccines to combat TB.

We recognize that you face difficult choices in deciding how to best fund the many foreign assistance programs that require support in FY 2017. We thank you for your continued leadership, and urge you consider TB as an important priority in your FY 2017 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Don Young
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

John Conyers
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

David Price
Member of Congress
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress

Andre Carson  
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress
Elijah E. Cummings  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Lujan  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

Jim Himes  
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

Joe Crowley  
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress
Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress