

## SENATE LETTER

# Support Robust Funding for Global Tuberculosis Programs in FY2018

Please join Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Todd Young (R-IN) in the call for robust funding for global tuberculosis programs for fiscal year 2018. For information, or to sign onto the letter, please contact Anna Gokaldas ([Anna.Gokaldas@brown.senate.gov](mailto:Anna.Gokaldas@brown.senate.gov)) in Senator Brown's office or Kevin Marsh ([Kevin.Marsh@young.senate.gov](mailto:Kevin.Marsh@young.senate.gov)) in Senator Young's office.

**\*\*The closing date for this letter is COB Friday, May 19\*\***

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

Thank you for your continued leadership in supporting State Department programs that are essential to our national security, diplomacy, and humanitarian efforts. We write to request that you provide robust funding for bilateral Tuberculosis (TB) control in the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations bill. Sustained funding would build on the success of the previous Administration's 2015 National Action Plan to Combat Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), and would help stem the spread of this killer disease both domestically and globally.

TB kills more individuals globally than any other infectious disease. More than 10 million people fell ill due to TB in 2015—including one million children—resulting in 1.8 million deaths that year. TB morbidity overwhelmingly impacts low- and middle-income countries, which account for 95% of annual deaths. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the disease also has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations: it is the leading killer of HIV-positive individuals, accounting for 35% of HIV deaths. The WHO also estimates that some 480,000 individuals contracted MDR-TB in 2015. Though global incidence of TB has decreased by 1.5% per year since 2000, it is estimated that a decrease of 4-5% per year is required to achieve the WHO's 2020 milestone for its *End TB Strategy*.

Since 2000, efforts by the U.S. and our global partners to treat and prevent TB have proven cost effective and have prevented the loss of an estimated 49 million lives and innumerable infections. Despite significant gains, there is much work to be done, especially as new surveillance methods in countries like India reveal a higher prevalence of TB infections than previously estimated. International aid from countries like the U.S. is essential to bringing down infection rates, as TB programs in low-income countries rely on foreign assistance for almost 90% of their funding. This is in addition to the severe need for additional research into treatment and prevention methods.

The United States has long been a leader on global health programs, like those that combat the spread of MDR-TB. U.S. foreign assistance is a pillar of American diplomacy. TB and other diseases do not recognize borders, and U.S. efforts to protect global health in turn protect domestic health. Additionally, our global health efforts strengthen relationships with international partners, further political stability in countries ravaged by the disease, and exemplify U.S. moral leadership.

## **SENATE LETTER**

We recognize that the President's budget request for FY18 would make drastic cuts to American foreign assistance programs. However, we also know you understand how these essential programs support American leadership abroad. We thank you for your continued leadership, and urge you to make combating TB a top priority for your FY18 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

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Senator SHERROD BROWN

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Senator TODD YOUNG