

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2007

Dear Friends:

Greetings to all of you gathered tonight for the Party for Hope in honor of World AIDS Day. I regret that my Congressional schedule will not allow me to join you in person.

As the co-chair of the Congressional Taskforce on International HIV/AIDS, I know that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is an enormous threat to global health and security. This pandemic doesn't recognize borders; ethnic groups; gender or economic status. It is a public health threat that jeopardizes our global economic prosperity, challenges our social and humanitarian responsibilities, and requires a continued commitment of all governments.

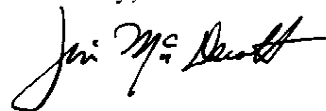
The fight against HIV/AIDS cannot succeed without the dedicated work of non-governmental organizations and grass-roots campaigns. Indeed, it has often been grass-roots leadership that has prodded governments to take HIV/AIDS seriously and to take action. Grass-roots campaigns are also needed to move our own government to ensure that everyone in our country has access to basic, affordable health care to prevent, screen and treat diseases like HIV/AIDS.

I recently attended the first Global Parliamentary Meeting on HIV/AIDS, where I gave keynote remarks. In my remarks, I said that if any of them ever feel discouraged over the prospects for ultimate success over HIV/AIDS, they should come to visit Seattle to be inspired by the enthusiasm, commitment and determination to succeed in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

I would like to recognize the importance of the work of the Northwest Microbicide Coalition, part of the Global Campaign for Microbicides, headquartered at PATH. As your website notes, "microbicides would put the power to protect into women's hands . . . and would be the most important innovation in reproductive health since the Pill." Your coalition of researchers, service providers and advocates is a powerful grouping, helping to provide world leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS. I support your advocacy, and am an original cosponsor of the Microbicides Development Act of 2007.

Best wishes for your party to build hope for victory over HIV/AIDS.

Sincerely,



Jim McDERMOTT
Member of Congress