

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
Washington, DC 20510

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 continue to show support for international tuberculosis (TB) elimination by providing robust funding for bilateral TB control in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOP) Appropriations bill.

TB is a curable, airborne infection that kills more people worldwide than any other infectious disease. In 2018, an estimated 10 million people, including one million children, became ill with TB. In the same year, more than 1.5 million individuals lost their lives to TB, with 4,000 people losing their lives each day because of the disease. Although TB disease is preventable if infected people receive timely treatment, few people in low- and middle-income countries receive this care. Less than 70 percent of global TB patients receive treatment; the rest continue to spread the disease in their families and communities.

TB is also the leading killer of people living with HIV/AIDS, and of the 10 million people who became ill with tuberculosis in 2018, 862,000 of new TB cases were among those living with HIV/AIDS. Failure to invest in TB, and integrated TB and HIV responses, threatens the substantial gains we have made in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In addition to the burden of preventable deaths, TB is frequently economically devastating for individuals and families, since pregnant women and children are especially vulnerable to the infection, and health care personnel are disproportionately at risk.

Despite our capacity to diagnose, treat, and limit transmission of this disease, rates of TB globally drop less than 2 percent annually. Failure to accelerate the pace of TB incidence means that, at our current rate, it would take 200 years for the global rate to be the same as the US TB rate. However, momentum is clearly building to end TB, with significant advances in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, as well as growing political will and community engagement. With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), countries have begun to reduce the rate of new cases and build up their capacity to respond to all forms of the disease. New technologies and the development of rapid, molecular diagnostics, have the potential to save more lives, provided they reach patients in time. And thanks to U.S. research and investment, we know that TB disease can be preventable if treated when it is still a latent infection, which involves a much shorter regimen of antibiotics for TB prevention.

We must accelerate the pace of reduction of TB incidence by promoting the tried-and-tested set of interventions that have been used successfully in countries like the U.S. USAID's Global Accelerator to End TB, launched in 2018, promises to speed up progress in the fight against TB by directing funding to local organizations in affected countries, including faith-based organizations. With adequate funding, USAID could do more to scale up a comprehensive approach to TB that includes a focus on prevention, ultimately saving money and lives.

During the September 2018 United Nations High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on TB, 120 countries – including the U.S. – agreed to ambitious new detection, treatment and prevention targets. We urge you to commit to funding levels that will ensure the U.S. can seize this momentum and lead the world in ending TB as a global security threat. With robust funding, USAID can help each country reach its prevention and treatment goals and ensure continued development and implementation of new, more effective treatments.

We also urge you to encourage USAID to prioritize U.S. investment in targeted and comprehensive strategies that involve SEARCH-TREAT-PREVENT protocol through committee directives in the FY21 funding bill. These principles of SEARCH, TREAT, and PREVENT are enshrined domestically in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s strategy for TB elimination. Globally, they are the backbone of PEPFAR's strategy to stop TB deaths in people living with HIV, the End TB Strategy, the Stop TB Partnership's Global Plan to End TB, and the 2018 UNHLM, all of which the U.S. government has pledged to support. With the current COVID-19 outbreak, it is clear that investments in the infrastructure for SEARCH-TREAT-PREVENT can support a platform that could be called upon during infectious disease outbreaks that demand the rapid mobilization of contact investigation and treatment. This is critical for both U.S. and global biosecurity.

In addition, the United States' contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (the Global Fund) is a crucial way to leverage more resources to combat TB and MDR-TB. Investments from USAID and the Global Fund are interdependent, with USAID providing crucial technical assistance to Global Fund grants. We request that the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund in FY21 exceed FY20 in order to facilitate global efforts to end TB.

Momentum is clearly building to end TB, with significant advances in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, as well as growing political will and community engagement. We acknowledge the difficulty you face in determining the best allocation of precious foreign assistance dollars. We thank you for your consistent support of USAID's TB control program and the Global Fund, and urge you to make combating TB a top priority for your FY21 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sherrod Brown  
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

/s/ Todd Young  
Todd Young  
United States Senator

/s/ Gary C. Peters  
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

/s/ Dan Sullivan  
Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth  
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie Hirono  
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin  
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

/s/ Elizabeth Warren  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema  
Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator

/s/ Maria Cantwell  
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen  
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator

/s/ Edward J. Markey  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

/s/ Bob Menendez  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

/s/ Debbie Stabenow  
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker  
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

/s/ Kamala D. Harris  
Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher Murphy  
Christopher Murphy  
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons  
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin  
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

/s/ Brian Schatz  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen  
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich  
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator