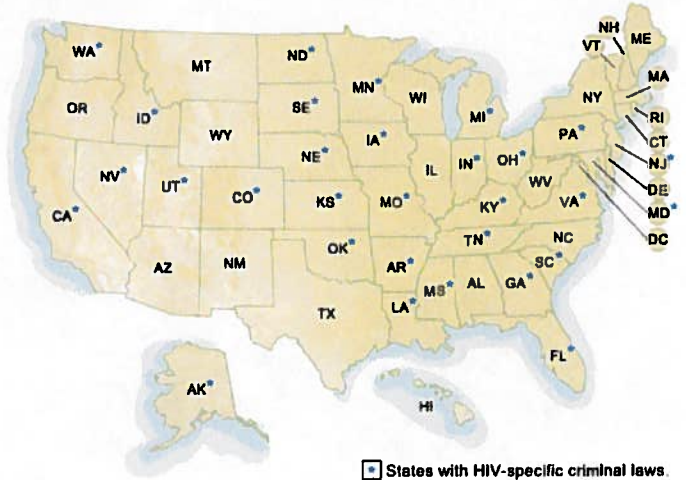


Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Support Bipartisan Bill to Modernize Discriminatory HIV/AIDS Laws

H.R. 1843 endorsed by the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and over 150 organizations including: Center for HIV Law and Policy; Sero Project; Lambda Legal; AIDS United; HIV/AIDS Law Project, U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN); HIV Prevention Justice Alliance; Association of Nurses in AIDS Care; ACLU; The AIDS Institute; Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE); Human Rights Campaign; National Minority AIDS Council; National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD); National Council of Jewish Women; UCAN Inc. (United Church of Christ HIV & AIDS Network); United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries; United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries; Black AIDS Institute, Latino Commission on AIDS, National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc., Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum; HIV Medicine Association; American Psychological Association; Southern AIDS Coalition, Inc.



Dear Colleague:

Current state and federal laws lag behind the medical advances and scientific discoveries in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Today, 32 states and 2 U.S. territories have criminal statutes based on outdated information. In addition, prosecutions for alleged exposure to HIV have occurred in at least 39 states. Instead of progress against the disease and protection for people living with HIV/AIDS, these laws breed fear, discrimination, distrust, and hatred.

In the last decade, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have affirmed that condom use, antiretroviral drug regimens, and other prevention strategies can drastically reduce the rate of HIV transmission. Furthermore, such laws that single out people with HIV for severe punishment in the absence of actual wrongdoing and treat a positive HIV test as evidence of a crime are contrary to our nation's values of fair treatment under the law, including equitable treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS and other disabilities.

That is why we introduced the bipartisan *Repeal Existing Policies that Encourage and Allow Legal HIV Discrimination Act*. Our no cost legislation requires the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Defense to:

- Work with state stakeholders (i.e., state attorneys general, public health officials, people living with HIV, legal advocacy and service organizations) to review laws, policies and cases that impose criminal liability on people living with HIV;
- Develop a set of best practices for the treatment of HIV in criminal and civil commitment cases;
- Issue guidance to states based on those best practices;
- Monitor whether/how states change policies consistent with that guidance.

Science and medical research have vastly changed our understanding of the virus and its transmission, and we need to modernize our laws to reflect this reality. For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Jirair Ratevosian (with Rep. Lee) at Jirair.Ratevosian@mail.house.gov or Nathan Gately (with Rep. Ros-Lehtinen) at Nathan.Gately@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress