

Mar., 2008, JUSTICE ALERT

TOPIC: Education for All Act

Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood....

Earth Charter – Principle 9.b.

Education attacks poverty at its roots, and strengthens families, communities, and nations. In addition to equipping a child with the knowledge and skills needed for a productive life, a basic education offers even deeper and wider returns for health, economic growth, and security, particularly in countries emerging from crisis. The Education for All Act authorizes an increased financial commitment, \$1 billion for FY 2008, for U.S. efforts to achieve universal basic education.

ACTION: 1) Contact your Congresspersons and ask them to cosponsor the Education for All Act (S. 1259 / H.R. 2092) - cosponsored by Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-AL) - which makes universal basic education a priority of U.S. foreign policy. Use the Capital Switchboard number **202-224-3121** or call your Congressperson's local office. 2) As we prepare for elections, keep the common good in mind: Educations, healthcare, care for children are priorities. 3) Pray for wisdom for our government officials as they make decisions that affect all people and our planet.

EDUCATION FOR ALL ACT 2007

(S. 1259 / H.R. 2092)

Background:

- Worldwide, 77 million children lack access to even basic education. Many children, particularly girls, are kept from school due to uniform or text book expenses or the loss of their contribution to family income.
- Poor countries also lack the funds to train and retain qualified teachers, provide teaching materials and build an adequate number of schools.
- It equips a child with the knowledge and skills needed for a productive life. A basic education offers deeper, wider returns for health, economic growth and security.
- Education that teaches tolerance and respect for different beliefs can be a crucial tool for preventing the rise of extremism worldwide.

ABOUT THE BILL

- The Education for All Act is a bipartisan bicameral bill lead by Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Representatives Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-AL).
- Under this legislation, the U.S. government would dramatically scale up its investment in basic education, and develop a comprehensive strategy to help put every child in school.
- By making universal basic education a major goal of U.S. foreign policy, our world and our nation will be stronger and safer.

EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL INVESTMENTS WE CAN MAKE

An estimated 77 million children worldwide lack access to primary education. Many children are kept from school due to costs associated with schooling or the loss of their contribution to family income. Impoverished countries also lack the funds to train and retain qualified teachers, provide text books and teaching materials, and build an adequate number of schools. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has further weakened education systems, wiping out a generation of teachers and forcing children, particularly girls, to stay home and care for sick family

members. However, a growing number of countries are making real progress through bold policy decisions like the abolition of school fees, creating national education plans through the World Bank's Education for All Fast Track Initiative, and investing more resources in education.

Education that teaches tolerance and respect for different beliefs can also be a crucial tool for preventing the rise of extremism worldwide. By making universal basic education a major goal of U.S. foreign policy, our world and our nation will be stronger and safer.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

- Authorizes additional funding for universal basic education – tied to strong standards of accountability and performance – to the tune of \$1 billion for Fiscal Year 2008, \$1.5 billion for FY09, \$2 billion for FY10, \$2.5 billion for FY11, and \$3 billion for FY12.
- The bill also seeks to prioritize funding for eliminating school fees and expanding access to education, training teachers and building infrastructure, promoting civic education and life skills training and supporting initiatives that reach the most disadvantaged populations.
- Establishes the position of an Education for All Coordinator, and calls for regular progress reports from the President.