

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act makes vital investments in research and care to ensure that Americans living with HIV and AIDS can maintain the highest quality of life as we strive to find a cure.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 22, 2009

CONTACT: Emily Barocas/202-225-7295

LARSON VOTES TO PROVIDE CRITICAL CARE FOR CT HIV/AIDS PATIENTS

Washington, DC –Congressman John B. Larson (*CT-01*), Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, voted to provide life-saving care, treatment, and support services to nearly half a million Americans living with HIV and AIDS. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act makes vital investments in research and care to ensure that Americans living with HIV and AIDS can maintain the highest quality of life as we strive to find a cure. It will also restore millions of dollars in federal aid to Connecticut and the Hartford area in particular.

“The Ryan White Program has been serving Americans living with HIV and AIDS for nearly 20 years,” said Congressman Larson. “This bipartisan bill makes key investments to improve the quality and affordability of care for HIV and AIDS patients. I am proud we were able to boost local funding to this program and provide our most vulnerable patients with the care they need.”

The last reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act led to more than \$3 million in cuts to HIV/AIDS care and services for the State of Connecticut. Hartford alone experienced a devastating 32% decrease in funding. The legislation this Congress passed will help restore much of the funding Connecticut had lost in previous years.

Shawn M. Lang, Director of Public Policy with the Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition said, **“I am thrilled that the Senate and House worked tirelessly to get the Ryan White Act passed. It means a tremendous amount to the thousands of people living in Connecticut with HIV/AIDS. We’re particularly pleased with the leadership of the Connecticut delegation, namely Senator Dodd and Congressman Larson, on this issue.”**

First established in 1990, the Ryan White Program has made it easier for HIV/AIDS patients to afford the costly medical treatments they need to survive. Today’s extension will increase the authorization level for each part of the program by 5% a year for the next 4 years to ensure that we continue to provide access to vital health benefits for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured Americans. It also makes investments to improve care in regions of the country with the highest rates of HIV/AIDS, and helps to eliminate disparities in access to care among racial and ethnic groups by funding the Minority AIDS Initiative – a program that ensures minority populations receive uninterrupted, quality care for HIV/AIDS.

“This program is a lifeline for some of our low-income and minority populations,” said Congressman Larson. “I am proud to stand with my colleagues in the House and Senate in support of this life-saving initiative to ensure that Connecticut residents living with HIV and AIDS receive this vital care.”

Each year, over 50,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS are reported in our communities. 1.1 million Americans are currently living with HIV or AIDS. More than 10,000 Connecticut residents are currently living with HIV/AIDS.

###