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## Public Statement on the Election of Rep. Henry Waxman to the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee

AIDS Project Los Angeles today congratulated Rep. Henry Waxman of Los Angeles on his election as Chair of the U. S. House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Committee.

House Democrats voted 137-122 in favor of Waxman on Thursday, replacing outgoing chair-emeritus Rep. John Dingell, Democrat of Michigan.

"Rep. Waxman is the right person to head up this pivotal committee," said APLA Executive Director Craig E. Thompson. "He has the experience and vision to steer a bold course as the committee tackles some of the most difficult issues challenging our country, including healthcare, energy and the environment."

"We wish him great success in his new role and look forward to working closely with him and his staff, as we have in the past," Thompson said.

"Rep. Waxman is one of the best allies people living with HIV and AIDS have had in Congress," he added, noting that Waxman originally sponsored what became the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990.

"Rep. Waxman saw the devastation of AIDS, understood that the U. S. urgently needed a coordinated response to the epidemic and created a piece of legislation that continues to provide care, treatment and support services to millions of Americans living with HIV and AIDS," Thompson said.

"APLA and the entire HIV/AIDS community could not ask for better leadership to lead Energy and Commerce, especially as we anticipate the next authorization of the CARE Act in 2009," he explained.

Thompson also praised Rep. Waxman's role as head of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

"Rep. Waxman has used his position at Government Reform to hold those in power accountable to Congress and the people," Thompson said, "and has come to define what it means to be the loyal opposition over the past eight years."

Thompson noted that one of the committee's latest hearings examined recently reported increases in the CDC's (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) estimate of HIV infections in the U.S.

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