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AIDS Project Los Angeles Remembers Congressman Tom Lantos

AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) mourns the loss of Congressman Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), champion of health and human rights, who died early this morning.

First elected to congress in 1980, Congressman Lantos leaves behind a legacy of fighting to uphold the rights and dignity of people in the U.S. and abroad. Among his many congressional achievements, he was instrumental in bringing about the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, more commonly known as "PEPFAR", the unprecedented \$15 billion, five-year initiative to fight HIV/AIDS in the world's hardest hit countries.

As Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman Lantos was spearheading the process to reauthorize this program that has been a lifeline for millions – including 1.4 million people now on anti-retroviral treatment, and 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children receiving care.

Mr. Lantos was a strong supporter of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, firmly opposing a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. He also advocated for the enactment of stringent hate crimes laws that include the GLBT community as a protected class.

"Congressman Lantos will be remembered as a staunch advocate for health and human rights," said Craig Thompson, executive director of APLA. "His tireless efforts in the global fight against HIV/AIDS provide an inspiring example that has produced real, life-changing improvements in the lives of millions."

APLA offers our deepest condolences to Congressman Lantos's family.

February 11, 2008