



Canadian
HIV/AIDS
Legal
Network

Réseau
juridique
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VIH/sida

The National Advocacy Committee
Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
Comité d'action national
Campagne de grands-mères à grands-mères



Statement Énoncé

For immediate release

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MPS CHOOSE HOPE — BILL C-393 PASSES!

Fight for access to medicines moves to Senate with launch of
www.LetDemocracyWin.ca

Statement by Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Members of Parliament have been guided by evidence and reason tonight by voting to pass important legislation that will save lives. After nearly seven years of unnecessary delay, Canada is closer to fulfilling its pledge to assist the developing world in getting access to affordable medicines for people dying of treatable diseases such as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Bill C-393, with its “one-license solution,” will reduce red tape and make Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) easier to use.

But we are not at the finish line yet. The bill will now go to the Senate. Given the Harper government’s opposition to Bill C-393, there is obvious concern that it will seek to block the will of the House of Commons – the people’s will. To confront this challenge, a new campaign is being launched tonight — www.LetDemocracyWin.ca — to encourage the Conservative government and all Senators to pass this bill without delay.

Consider that the Senate quickly passed the original version of this bill almost seven years ago, and an identical bill to the current one was recently studied by a Senate committee, with extensive testimony from experts. With a potential election on the horizon, politically motivated stall tactics or instructions from the Prime Minister’s Office to override the House of Commons vote could terminate the bill.

The legislation to reform CAMR has the support of international aid workers, human rights organizations, physicians, faith leaders and health activists and almost 50 000 Canadians who have recently joined a petition calling on Parliament to pass this bill. According to an opinion poll, 80% of the public also support this bill.

We wish to thank all MPs who supported this bill from each of the parties, particularly NDP MPs Brian Masse (Windsor West) and Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre), as well as former NDP MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North), for advancing this bill in the House as far as it went. We thank and salute all those of our allies in civil society groups, too numerous to mention, who have participated in this years-long effort. We are proud to say the campaign to deliver affordable medicines to people dying of treatable diseases in developing countries continues!

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