



# News Release Communiqué

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## **CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF URGENT PASSAGE OF ACCESS TO MEDICINES BILL**

*Bill C-393 must be swiftly passed before possible election call in order to  
save lives now*

**Ottawa, March 23, 2011** — A broad array of Canadian civil society organizations working on human rights, global health and international development are urging Parliamentarians to stop the politicking, do the right thing and support critical reform of Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) without delay. They are joined in their plea for life-saving action by Senators from both sides of the aisle. Bill C-393, passed in the House of Commons and up before the Senate today, carries the power and potential to fix CAMR and thereby get affordable generic medicines to those suffering and dying of treatable illnesses in developing countries.

Senators from all parties must act quickly in dealing with Bill C-393. Without their swift approval, this humanitarian bill will likely die when the election writ is dropped — which the opponents of Bill C-393 clearly hope will happen.

But momentum and public support around Bill C-393 continues to grow exponentially. The bill is actively supported by many prominent Canadians including international aid

workers, human rights leaders, physicians, faith leaders and health activists. It also has the support of more than 70,000 Canadians who have recently signed a petition or sent letters calling on Parliament to pass this bill into law. Indeed, the Bill was passed on March 9<sup>th</sup> by a strong majority of Members of Parliament — 172 to 111 — representing all parties, echoing the will of the Canadian people.

Therefore, and with the threat of election looming, it is all the more imperative that Senators respect the will of the Canadian people and their elected representatives and swiftly pass Bill C-393, lest the bill die on the Order Paper. Senators will be very familiar with the bill before them: a virtually identical bill — Bill S-232 — was studied at length by the Senate in 2009, and expert witnesses and testimony were heard and considered before that bill succumbed to the prorogation of Parliament later that same year. It would be unconscionable to let this initiative die a second time because of irresponsible stalling tactics and procedural delays in the Senate.

Civil society groups are calling today for urgent political will and leadership from the Canadian Senate to pass Bill C-393 and keep Parliament's unanimous promise, made years ago when they created CAMR, to make affordable generic drugs available to the developing world. The clock is ticking loudly — not only because an election appears imminent, but because people continue to needlessly suffer and die while we ponder their fates.

More information can be found in the attached document "Fixing Canada's Access to Medicines: What you need to know about Bill C-393". More detailed arguments for Bill C-393 by international legal and health experts can be reviewed at [www.aidslaw.ca/camr](http://www.aidslaw.ca/camr).

**Signatories:**

Bracelet of Hope  
Canadian AIDS Society  
Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange  
Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Canadian Council for International Co-operation  
Canadian Crossroads International  
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
Canadian Treatment Action Council  
Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation  
CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network  
COCQ-SIDA  
Dignitas International  
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development  
L'Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale  
National Advocacy Committee of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign  
People's Health Movement  
RESULTS Canada  
Save the Children Canada

UNICEF Canada  
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines

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