

**Hourly Statement**  
**World AIDS Day 2005**

“[Tonight/Today]”, we stand before the world disappointed and angry at our leaders’ overwhelming failure to rid the world of one of humanity’ most catastrophic plagues. But we also stand here asking them to dare to take on a new challenge—to join the **Campaign to End AIDS**, to finally rid the world of this terrible epidemic.

We are losing the battle against the epidemic, here and around the world. As the AIDS pandemic continues into its third decade, more than 28 million people worldwide have died since this epidemic began. This year alone, AIDS has killed more than 3 million people, while 5 million people have been infected with HIV. Globally, one person dies from AIDS every 11 seconds. And in the United States, over half a million people have lost their future to this horrible plague.

In the early years of AIDS, the silence of our government, at ALL levels, was deafening. Since those bleak days, the rhetoric has increased but actions have never been sufficient to match the words or the desperate need.

These days, our president, our governor, our mayor and other elected officials speak eloquently, if only rarely, of the need to end AIDS. They receive standing ovations for the effort. But then, with rank hypocrisy, they callously withhold even those resources they have publicly pledged.

Their failed leadership has resulted in 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. More than half of these people are women and far too many are young girls. Every 15 seconds, a new person is infected with HIV.

Our prevention policies are a horrendous failure. In the United States, there are now over 1 million people living with AIDS and HIV, according to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over 100,000 of these men, women and children reside right here in New York City, the nation’s “ground zero” for the AIDS epidemic. Well over 100,000 New Yorkers have HIV infection or HIV disease and are unaware of their own condition. And day after day, hundreds more of our neighbors and loved ones are infected anew. In fact, last year alone, 1 in 5 new infections in the U.S. occurred in New York City.

And right here in New York City, over 80,000 people have died from this horrible disease. These are not just statistics. Each of these persons has a name. They are our brothers, our sisters, our sons and our daughters. They are our parents, our lovers and our friends.

Many people with AIDS and HIV are homeless. Many are frightened and in despair. Some are suffering from lack of drug treatment. Some are in desperate need of mental health services. Still others lack basic health care. Without essential services and care, our friends will continue to die.

We have the tools we need to reverse the tide of this raging epidemic and we demand their use. We demand worldwide treatment and care for all people living with AIDS and HIV. We demand a return to effective science-based prevention. We demand more research towards a true cure. And we demand an end to stigma and discrimination against people with living with AIDS and HIV everywhere.

Just last month, eight caravans of people with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones—thousands of us, from nearly every state—made their way to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. in cars and on foot with these four demands in tow. These four demands are the underpinnings of the **Campaign to End AIDS**, a new and dynamic national network that is challenging lawmakers everywhere to exert their political will and their compassion to halt the epidemic here and abroad.

We gather [tonight/today] to read the names of our dead. We read their names to honor their memory. We read their names to remind ourselves of their worth and of whom we have lost. We read their names to tell the Mayor of this our City, the Governor of this our State, and the President of this our Country, that people with AIDS are still dying and are still in need of real leadership to bring this epidemic to an end – once and for all.