



The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation Launches Initiative for Modernization of Laws and Criminal Penalties for People Living with HIV

The Foundation partners with Gilead Sciences, Inc. and the Health Not Prisons Collective on a major, multi-state effort to decriminalize HIV and modernize laws that lead to the discrimination of people living with HIV.

Los Angeles, CA – June 18, 2020 – The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAF) announced today a new national initiative focused on the modernization of criminal laws and penalties for people living with HIV. The effort will launch in partnership with Gilead Sciences, Inc., and a national alliance of advocacy partners including The Counter Narrative Project, Positive Women’s Network, The Sero Project, Transgender Law Center, and the US People Living with HIV Caucus. The Artemis Agency, a Los Angeles-based social impact firm, will be working with ETAF on the public education and awareness campaign. ETAF will also partner with state-based organizations as needed to ensure the initiative’s success.

Catherine Brown, ETAF Executive Director explains, “very simply, science and the law have not caught up with each other on this issue, there is a disparity between what science tells us and what the laws and statutes in more than 30 states believe. HIV is not a crime, and those living with HIV are being held back by harmful laws and policies that discourage people from getting tested and treated.”

Gilead Sciences, Inc., a research-based biopharmaceutical company with headquarters in Foster City, California, is committed to the initiative and to supporting ETAF and The Health Not Prisons Collective.

“Gilead is proud to support this critical work against the criminalization of HIV,” said Brett Pletcher, Executive Vice President of Corporate Affairs and General Counsel. “These outdated and unjust laws disproportionately affect marginalized communities and further perpetuate the misinformation and stigma that result in decreased testing and poorer health outcomes. This collaborative initiative creates the possibility for systemic change that moves us closer to our collective vision of a more just society, free from discrimination and othering.”

On June 25th, ETAF will host a virtual town hall event to launch the initiative and address the effects of the current environment on the HIV community, as racial

inequality and COVID-19 have disproportionately affected and threatened the lives of those who have been incarcerated as a result of their HIV status.

The campaign to modernize criminal laws and penalties that target people living with HIV will focus its initial efforts in Nevada and Ohio, where staffers will work with local advocates to prepare and introduce legislation. The effort also intends to address issues of insurance discrimination against people living with HIV in California, and will support legislation introduced in Missouri once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted for lawmakers in that state.

Read more about The Town Hall on July 25, 2020 and ETAF here:

<https://elizabethayloraidfoundation.org>

More information about Gilead's community work in HIV is here:

<https://www.gilead.com/purpose/partnerships-and-community>

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About The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation

Working tirelessly on the AIDS crisis through the 1980s, Elizabeth Taylor established The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAF) in 1991 to reach her vision of an AIDS-free world. ETAF works to provide the direct care needed for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. Emphasizing Elizabeth's commitment to marginalized communities, ETAF's work ensures that HIV prevention education and access to treatment are available through domestic and international initiatives. HIV Decriminalization nationally, is ETAF's primary advocacy initiative. We now have the necessary tools to stop the spread of HIV and end the AIDS crisis with sufficient resources.

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