

DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN  
DELEGATE, VIRGIN ISLANDS

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CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS  
MEMBER, CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS FOR  
WOMEN'S ISSUES

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-5501

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

WASHINGTON OFFICE

1510 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-1790  
FAX (202) 225-5517

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#1 ESTATE CANE  
FREDERIKSTED, VI 00840  
P.O. BOX 5980  
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(340) 778-5900  
FAX (340) 778-5111

SUITE No. 207

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(340) 774-4408  
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CRUZ BAY, ST. JOHN  
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS 00831  
(340) 776-1212

Dear Friends:

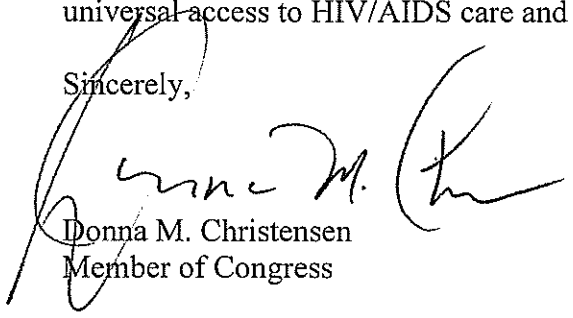
It is with great pleasure that I write to offer my support of The National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. During this week we will bring attention to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and show our unconditional love and support to those that are living with the disease. Let us also educate ourselves, our friends, our families and our communities to prevent adding to this devastating epidemic. We must embrace those most affected, and eliminate stigma and shame as we stand together and stand up to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Though anyone can be at risk for becoming infected, HIV/AIDS continues to disproportionately affect young people and communities of color. Blacks account for more new HIV infections, AIDS cases, and HIV-related deaths than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States. The U.S. Virgin Islands, despite its small population size has the nation's second highest AIDS case rate – a rate that is roughly two and a half times higher than the national average. People living with HIV and AIDS also face several challenges including discrimination and access to treatment and care.

Through our faith we can unite for this occasion and lead efforts to not only address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, but create a positive support system for those living with it. It is important that their voices continue to be heard. By engaging in this national movement, we can empower each other to stay strong in our fight to defeat HIV/AIDS. We must continue to advocate on behalf of those that have HIV and AIDS and know that together, we will make a difference.

As we recognize this week of prayer, let us pay tribute to the men, women, and children who have lost their lives to this disease, and let us honor their lives and memories by vowing to make universal access to HIV/AIDS care and treatment a human right.

Sincerely,

  
Donna M. Christensen  
Member of Congress