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SCHAKOWSKY ENCOURAGES PRESIDENT TO FIGHT FOR FUNDING FOR EARLY TREATMENT OF AIDS IN END OF YEAR BUDGET DEAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) urged President Clinton to *"work to win enactment of the Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA) as part of the ongoing budget negotiations."*

In a letter to the President dated October 13, 2000, Schakowsky wrote, *"One of the most tragic consequences of the lack of access to medical care is that so many people develop serious and costly illnesses that are preventable or treatable with early intervention. This is certainly true in the case of thousands of HIV positive individuals who, if given access to protease inhibitors and other new treatments, could live healthy and productive lives for many years. Tragically, many of them will be unable to afford those treatments unless and until they develop full-blown AIDS and, as a result, qualify for Medicaid."*

She continued, *"It simply makes no sense to require that low-income individuals develop AIDS before they can receive assistance. Instead, we should cover drug therapies for HIV-positive persons under Medicaid to prevent them from ever developing AIDS."*

Schakowsky concluded, *"Your Administration has a strong record of commitment and innovation in improving access to health care. I hope that you will continue that record by working to include the provisions of the ETHA in a final BBA agreement."*