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## ▶ Election Action Alert: Make your voice heard on global health and human rights

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### Election advocacy at the local level

Over the next several weeks, candidates for Members of Parliament (MP) across Canada will be holding local events, going door-to-door to talk to voters, and enlisting volunteers to call local residents. While the primary purpose of these activities is to convince you to vote for a particular candidate, they also provide a key opportunity for you to raise the issues that are most important to you.

Collectively, we can influence the priorities of future MPs and of political parties in Canada by speaking about the importance of global health funding and international human rights. You will have opportunities at local candidate events and when candidates or their volunteers come to your door or call you.

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### Suggested format for talking to a candidate for MP

**1. Introduce yourself and share your connection to the issue and your community, if relevant.**

For example, you might say: For 15 years, I have been active in a group of 50 local grandmothers who are raising money for the Stephen Lewis Foundation in support of African grandmothers who are caring for children orphaned by AIDS.

OR

I support local and international causes as a volunteer and, when I can, as a donor. One of the most important of those to me is global health.

**2. Share a brief introduction to the issue.**

The introduction can be as simple as saying: Global health is important to me this election.

You can also choose to go into more detail about the importance of international assistance funding, the impacts of U.S. funding cuts, and attacks on human rights. *See examples below.*

**3. Ask a specific question about how the candidate or their party will address the issue and where they stand on the topic. *See examples below.***

**4. Ask for follow-up if the person is not able to answer on the spot.**

If you're talking to a volunteer canvasser, they may not know the answer. Ask them to bring the issue back to their volunteer coordinator and have the candidate or a staff member follow-up with you.

**5. Insist on an actual answer from the candidate.**

If you're speaking to the candidate directly — at your door or at an event — they may try to talk generally about the issue and not actually answer your question. You can ask a follow-up question or re-state your question to push for a real answer. If they can't or won't answer on the spot, you can ask them to get back to you with concrete information on the topic.

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## Suggested questions to ask local candidates, or their canvasser

- Global health is a key issue for me in this election. What will your party [or candidate X] do to maintain or increase Canada's commitment on this issue?

Note: *When it comes to speaking about global health, please feel free to speak about your specific concerns and priorities. For example, the global HIV epidemic, global poverty, international human rights, international assistance spending, equal access to education for girls around the world, or the Sustainable Development Goals.*

- I don't want to see Canada following the isolationist path that the United States is taking. How will your party [or candidate X] work to make sure that Canada is supporting a healthier and more equal world?
- I believe that Canada's interests are not distinct from the interests of communities around the world. Where does your party stand on Canadian international assistance to support the health and well-being of people in other countries?
- I'm concerned by the rise of hate and the attacks at home and abroad on trans people, LGBTIQ communities, and women's rights. How will your party [or candidate X] protect human rights in Canada and internationally?
- This election, I'm really worried about whether Canada will follow in the footsteps of the United States and other countries that are cutting international assistance. I want to see Canada continue to be a global leader on health and human rights. What will your party [or candidate X] do to ensure we don't leave millions of people to die?
- Canada's international assistance funding is essential to ensuring people don't die of preventable and treatable diseases. I don't want to see Canada follow in the footsteps of the U.S. How will your party [or candidate X] ensure Canada doesn't turn our back on the global community?

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## Background information on global health and the importance of international assistance

You don't have to be an expert on the ins and outs of global health or international assistance to care and to raise it as a priority to MP candidates. Still, you may find it helpful to have some key points at hand.

- Funding for global health is a critical investment in the health and well-being of the world's population. It helps address disparities in health outcomes around the world, saves lives, prevents the spread of communicable diseases around the globe, and helps foster economic growth and stability.

- Canadian governments from all parties have long believed in the importance of supporting global health initiatives and have invested in this work around the globe. Canada has a history of saving lives. In a recent Abacus Data poll, 9 out of 10 Canadians affirmed their support for Canada's role in advancing global health and development initiatives.
- The U.S. international funding cuts [have already been devastating](#) and if the gaps are not filled, they will be catastrophic. For instance, UNAIDS estimates that over the next 5 years there will be an additional 6.3 million deaths from AIDS-related causes if U.S. HIV funding is permanently stopped and other funders don't step in to fill the gap.
- Many people think that Canada spends significantly more on international assistance than it actually does. In 2022, Canada spent 0.37% of the country's Gross National Income (GNI) on international assistance. This is well below the amount recommended by the United Nations, which is 0.7% of GNI.
- International assistance funding has been vital in preventing new HIV transmissions and significantly reducing deaths from AIDS-related causes. For instance, international assistance from Canada and others around the world has contributed to a 69% decline in AIDS-related deaths since the peak of the epidemic in 2004. Also, since 2010, new HIV transmissions to children have declined by 62%.
- Investments in maternal, infant and child health and nutrition have helped the world reach a historic low in mortality for children under 5 years of age. Since 2000, the under-5 mortality rate has been cut in half, saving 5 million children's lives every year.

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## Let us know what you hear!

If you talk to a candidate, we'd love to hear how it goes.  
Where do they stand on the issues you raised? We invite you  
to email us at [advocacy@stephenlewisfoundation.org](mailto:advocacy@stephenlewisfoundation.org).