

# Support FY26 Funding for Polio Eradication

Sending Office: Honorable Steve Cohen  
Sent By: [Rachel.Citron@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.Citron@mail.house.gov)

## Support FY26 Funding for Polio Eradication

### Quill Links:

[LHHS Request](#)

[NSDS Request](#)

Please join us in sending two programmatic request letters to the House Appropriations Committee's Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee and National Security, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee in support of Fiscal Year 2026 funding for polio eradication.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is one of the largest, most successful public-private health initiatives ever created. Since its launch in 1988, GPEI has immunized three billion children, saving over 900,000 from polio-related deaths and 20 million from disability. Additionally, more than 1.5 million childhood deaths have been averted thanks to the systematic administration of Vitamin A during polio campaigns. The cumulative result of these efforts is that the number of people afflicted with polio has declined by more than 99.9 percent, and two of the three types of wild polio virus have been stopped.

These results show that the eradication of polio is within reach. Endemic poliovirus transmission continues to be very restricted. Fewer than 100 cases were confirmed in 2024 in these endemic countries, where insecurity continues to hamper efforts to reach all children. Last year saw progress in reducing outbreaks of variant poliovirus which were exacerbated by setbacks in routine immunization following the pandemic. There were nearly 50% fewer cases of variant poliovirus located in fewer geographic areas in 2024 as compared to 2023.

The progress made against polio would not have been possible without the financial and political commitment of the United States, which is a leading public-sector donor to global polio eradication efforts and has contributed \$4.7 billion to bring us to the threshold of a polio-free world. This commitment has also leveraged billions of dollars in funding from other countries that support the cause.

Yet the progress made to eradicate this virus should not be taken for granted. If we don't complete eradication, it will come roaring back. As we were reminded in 2022, this disease can still threaten Americans within our own country. That year we witnessed the first case of paralytic polio in the United States in decades and also detected the polio virus in wastewater in several counties in the state of New York, as well as in the United Kingdom and Canada. These virus detections are a stark reminder that until the world is polio free, all children, even those in the United States, are at risk. Continued U.S. leadership is essential to protect the progress we have made and ensure we capitalize on this historic opportunity to eradicate polio.

Investment in global polio eradication helps keep American citizens safe from this highly infectious disease while also strengthening countries' health systems, establishing vital public-health tools, enhancing infrastructure, and training skilled health workers in the

developing world. Polio eradication staff have served as “first responders,” providing vital support to fight other disease outbreaks, including Ebola and measles, and helping to mitigate the risk of these broader disease threats to Americans.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact [Rachel.Citron@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.Citron@mail.house.gov) in Congressman Steve Cohen’s Office or [Michael.MacHarg@mail.house.gov](mailto:Michael.MacHarg@mail.house.gov) in Congressman Joe Wilson’s office.

Sincerely,

Steve Cohen

Joe Wilson

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

**House Labor HHS Appropriations Subcommittee Letter**

Chairman Robert Aderholt  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, HHS, Education  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro  
House Appropriation Subcommittee on  
Labor, HHS, Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your ongoing support of funding for polio eradication through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Global Immunization Division. We are writing to request that you provide **at least \$180 million for this program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.**

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is one of the largest, most successful public private health initiatives ever created. As a result of this global effort, three billion children have been immunized, 20 million have been spared disability, and over 900,000 polio-related deaths have been averted. In addition, more than 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented thanks to the systematic administration of Vitamin A during polio campaigns. Every year more than 650,000 children are spared lifelong paralysis thanks to continued polio eradication efforts.

Since the program’s launch in 1988, global polio incidence has been reduced by more than 99 percent. However, outbreaks of variant poliovirus which have increased following the pandemic health service disruptions pose an ongoing challenge to under-immunized communities. There were nearly 50% fewer such cases in fewer places in 2024 as compared to 2023 and efforts continue to stop these outbreaks.

This funding in FY 2026 will allow the CDC to continue its global leadership in support of GPEI’s polio eradication strategy through 2029. The two main goals of the strategy are to permanently interrupt all polio virus transmission in endemic countries; and to stop transmission of variant poliovirus and prevent outbreaks in non-endemic countries. This funding would enable the CDC to build capacity in endemic, outbreak and at-risk countries to respond to outbreaks in a timely manner through high-quality immunization campaigns. It will also support procurement and delivery of vaccines including the novel oral polio vaccine (nOPV) to prevent and respond to outbreaks of variant poliovirus. The requested funding would also strengthen polio surveillance using tools such as direct detection and environmental surveillance, and increased use of digitization and evidence-based innovations to overcome immunization barriers and strengthen in-country capacity.

The first case of paralytic polio in the United States in decades was confirmed in 2022 along with detections of poliovirus in wastewater in several counties in the state of New York. These were stark reminders that until the world is polio free, all children, even those in the United States, will be at risk.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are now the only two countries that have not yet stopped transmission of wild polio. Fewer than one hundred cases were confirmed in 2024 in these endemic countries, where insecurity continues to hamper efforts to reach all children. Africa was certified as being wild poliovirus-free in August 2020 and has maintained that status, despite an importation of wild poliovirus from Pakistan in 2022. However, outbreaks of variant poliovirus, which increased following the pandemic health service disruptions, pose an ongoing challenge to under-immunized communities. There were nearly 50% fewer such cases located in fewer geographic areas in 2024 as compared to 2023 and GPEI is leading efforts to stop these outbreaks. The time is now to complete polio eradication once and for all.

Similar to smallpox eradication, polio eradication is a cost-effective public health investment and could save an estimated \$33.1 billion this century, compared to the cost of merely controlling the virus and responding continuously to outbreaks. Supporting eradication now is an upfront investment in future savings. Furthermore, the physical and human assets developed for polio have bolstered other immunization programs and health systems, improving global and local capacity to respond quickly to public health threats like Ebola, and Zika. These broad benefits demonstrate the enduring value of our investments in global polio eradication.

Continued U.S. leadership is essential to ensuring we capitalize on this historic opportunity to rid the world of polio. To continue this tremendous progress, we respectfully request your support for the polio eradication efforts of the CDC in the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

**House National Security, Department of State, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Subcommittee Letter**

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on National Security, Department

Ranking Member Lois Frankel  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on National Security, Department

of State, and Related Programs  
HT-2, The Capitol

of State, and Related Programs  
1016 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Frankel:

Thank you for your ongoing support of funding for global polio eradication efforts. We are writing to request that you provide **at least \$85 million for these vital activities in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations bill.**

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is one of the largest, most successful public-private health initiatives ever created. As a result of this global effort, three billion children have been immunized, 20 million have been spared disability, and over 900,000 polio-related deaths have been averted. In addition, more than 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented thanks to the

systematic administration of Vitamin A during polio campaigns. Every year more than 650,000 children are spared lifelong paralysis thanks to continued polio eradication efforts.

This funding in FY 2026 will support execution of essential activities of GPEI's polio eradication strategy through 2029. The two main goals of the strategy are to permanently interrupt all poliovirus transmission in endemic countries; and to stop transmission of variant poliovirus and prevent outbreaks in non-endemic countries. Increased funding would also improve national and subnational capacity for monitoring poliovirus transmission by expanding environmental surveillance, increasing the number of surveillance medical officers and community-based surveillance officers. It would also support high-quality immunization and outbreak response campaigns in high-risk and remote areas through targeted, evidence-based innovations to overcome barriers, build community demand for vaccination, and strengthen in-country capacity to interrupt all forms of poliovirus transmission globally.

The first confirmed case of paralytic polio in the United States in decades was confirmed in 2022 along with detections of poliovirus in wastewater in several counties in the state of New York. These were stark reminders that until the world is polio free, all children, even those in the United States, will be at risk.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are now the only two countries that have not yet stopped transmission of wild polio. Fewer than one hundred cases were confirmed in 2024 in these endemic countries, where insecurity continues to hamper efforts to reach all children. Africa was certified as being wild poliovirus-free in August 2020 and has maintained that status, despite an importation of wild poliovirus from Pakistan in 2022. However, outbreaks of variant poliovirus, which have increased following the pandemic health service disruptions, pose an ongoing challenge to under-immunized communities. There were nearly 50% fewer such cases located in fewer geographic areas in 2024 as compared to 2023 and GPEI is leading efforts to stop these outbreaks. The time is now to complete polio eradication once and for all.

Similar to smallpox eradication, polio eradication is a cost-effective public health investment. Polio eradication is highly cost-effective and could save an estimated \$33.1 billion this century, compared to the cost of merely controlling the virus and responding continuously to outbreaks. Supporting eradication now is an upfront investment in future savings. Furthermore, the physical and human assets developed for polio have bolstered other immunization programs and health systems, improving global and local capacity to respond quickly to public health threats like Ebola, and Zika. These broad benefits demonstrate the enduring value of our investments in global polio eradication.

Continued U.S. leadership is essential to ensuring we capitalize on this historic opportunity to rid the world of polio. To continue this tremendous progress, we respectfully request your support for polio eradication efforts in the FY 2026 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,