

Clinton urges sweeping action on AIDS



AP Photo: Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., speaks at the Global Summit on AIDS...

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By MICHAEL R. BLOOD, Associated Press Writer

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LAKE FOREST, Calif. - [Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) used an appearance at one of the nation's largest evangelical churches Thursday to sketch a broad agenda to take on disease around the globe, calling it "the right thing to do."

The centerpiece of a speech laced with Biblical references and reflections on her own faith was a call to spend billions of dollars to [combat HIV/AIDS](#) and other infectious diseases at home and abroad. She said she would try to stamp out malaria deaths in Africa within eight years.

Money and government alone cannot solve the problems, she said. [AIDS](#) "is a problem of our common humanity, and we are called to respond with love, with mercy and with urgency," she said.

With the presidential campaign intensifying in [Iowa](#), [New Hampshire](#) and [South Carolina](#), Clinton was alone among leading candidates to fly to coastal California to appear at Saddleback Church in [Orange County](#), where pastor and best-selling author [Rick Warren](#) convenes a conference each year to highlight the global threat posed by [HIV/AIDS](#).

Earlier this week Clinton released her proposal to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, which focuses in part on fighting the spread of the illness in minority communities. As president, she would double the [HIV/AIDS research budget](#) at the [National Institutes of Health](#) — to \$5.2 billion annually — and spend at least \$50 billion within five years around the globe.

On Thursday, speaking to about 1,700 conference attendees, she said as president she would also call for spending \$1 billion a year to address malaria infection in Africa. She set a goal of eradicating malaria deaths in Africa by the end of her second term.

Many Christian conservatives dread the possibility of another Clinton White House, a point of agreement in a year when prominent leaders in the movement have divided their loyalties among GOP contenders.

There was a sprinkle of criticism from conservatives in response to Clinton's appearance at the church, but it was muted compared to last year when more than a dozen conservative leaders signed a letter urging Warren to rescind an invitation to [Sen. Barack Obama](#), D-Ill., who supports abortion rights. The church defended his appearance.

Warren is theologically and socially conservative, but he is known for avoiding the scrum of partisan politics. The author of "[The Purpose-Driven Life](#)" has devoted much of his time in recent years mobilizing evangelicals to fight AIDS in Africa.

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The speech gave Clinton a chance to appear on stage with the popular pastor — who greeted her with a hug — as well as talk at length about her own faith.

"I've been raised to understand the power and purpose of prayer," she said at one point.

Warren thanked her for attending. "We invited all of them to come, but she was the one who showed up," he said.

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