


OP-ED: Doing nothing on health reform would be disaster for middle class

AIDS research targeted in one U.S. healthcare bill


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Fri Jul 24, 4:57 pm ET

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Should U.S. taxpayers be funding research involving Thai prostitutes?

Republican Representative Darrell Issa does not think so. He announced on Friday he had amended one version of healthcare reform legislation to bar three projects to study AIDS transmission among Chinese and Thai prostitutes and Russian alcoholics.

"Though I support worldwide elimination of [HIV](#), we don't need \$5 million in U.S. tax dollars flowing to study the behavior of Thai and Chinese sex workers," Issa said in a statement on the National Institutes of Health projects.

Scientists complained that politicians should not dabble in such specifics of medical funding -- and President Barack Obama has pledged to let science guide scientific and health policy.

Researchers said the projects would help scientists understand how diseases spread, and noted that AIDS and the current [pandemic](#) of swine flu both originated outside the United States but now affect millions of Americans.

"Public health research, such as efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS, should not be turned into a political issue," said Alan Leshner, chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"Understanding the factors that affect disease transmission is vitally important to improving human health worldwide."

(Editing by Andrew Quinn)

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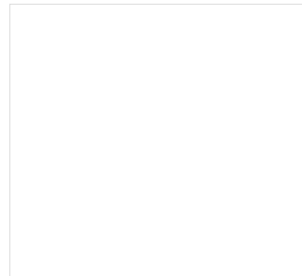
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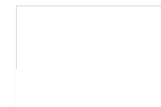
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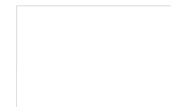
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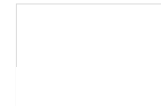
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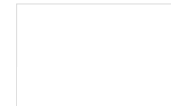
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