

# *Water Advocates*

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## **President Signs Bipartisan Drinking Water Bill US Committed to Solving Leading Cause of Sickness in the World** *“[Bill is] Most Significant Global Legislation Passed by this Congress”*

**Washington, D.C.** – Water Advocates released the statement below following President Bush’s signing of the *Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005* (H.R. 1973) into law. Water-related diseases are the leading cause of sickness and death in the world, killing between 2 and 5 million people every year, most of them children under five years old.

The new law came as a result of tremendous bipartisan efforts made by Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Senator Bill Frist (R-TN), Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL), and Senator Harry Reid (D-NV). Representative Blumenauer and Senator Frist originally authored legislation in the both the House and Senate.

**“Water Advocates thanks President Bush and all the Members of Congress who supported this critical legislation,”** said David Douglas, president of Water Advocates. **“In today’s fractured Congress it is inspiring to see so many Members on both sides of the aisle coming together to help solve this persistent need. This bill will have an enormous impact on lives around the globe.”**

**“The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act is the most significant global legislation passed by this Congress,”** said Ambassador John McDonald, Chairman of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy and a leader in global drinking water issues for almost thirty years. **“This bill provides the platform on which we can advance US action and implementation, as well as build on the Millennium Development Goals and the UN Decade of Water adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2003.”**

Waterborne diseases cause over 80 percent of illnesses in the developing world. Access to adequate drinking water and sanitation serves as a catalyst for better public health, education, poverty reduction, and women’s empowerment.

This passed legislation creates an opportunity to save hundreds of thousands of lives by extending safe water to those most in need. It also makes drinking water and sanitation a cornerstone of US foreign policy and directs the Department of State to come up with an overall strategy to be implemented by the US Agency of International Development (USAID).

The Water for the Poor Act was overwhelmingly passed by the House on November 7<sup>th</sup> with strong bipartisan support, passed the Senate by unanimous consent on November 16<sup>th</sup>, and was signed into law by President Bush on December 1, 2005.

The bill was named for the late Senator from Illinois, Paul Simon, who was a Congressional pioneer in recognizing the need and advocating for drinking water and sanitation worldwide.

Water Advocates is a US-based nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing American support for worldwide access to safe, affordable, and sustainable drinking water and adequate sanitation. For more information go to [www.wateradvocates.org](http://www.wateradvocates.org).