

Date: March 29, 2017
To: House Committee on Health Care
From: Daniel LaForce
Re: Support for HB 3086

I was diagnosed as HIV positive in 1988. I started taking the "cocktail" in 1999, and after a few years of this treatment, I started to show signs of drug induced facial lipoatrophy.

While being driven home from rehearsal at the Shakespeare Festival at Tulane in New Orleans, an actress friend asked me if I had AIDS. While I was initially shocked by her statement, she told me that the look of gauntness was AIDS related. It happened over a period of time, so I didn't notice it quite so much. I asked my doctor what caused the gauntness, and she explained to me "HIV drug induced lipoatrophy", and she took me off of ZERIT and VIRACEPT. The lipoatrophy has continued to progress, as you can see in a photo taken in 2015, and recent photos. Some people say it's "early aging", I'm only 54.

I've been a professional actor during different times of my life. Due to the changes in my face, I am limited with what kind of "commercial" work that I can do, television, film, etc. People who know the HIV+ world are always be able to tell what was going on. I have had to come to terms with how my appearance has adversely affected my professional career.

I have researched several options, all of which are outside my price range. After months of research I gave up finding an affordable solution.

It gets tiresome. Some stare, others refuse to look me in the face, all are wondering what condition I have. I usually disclose my HIV status to everyone now. It makes it easier, and helps to educate my friends and acquaintances about HIV related illnesses. It would be a dream to get my cheeks full again. Treatment for my lipodystrophy would positively affect not only my professional career and my personal relationships.