

ACTION SHEET

Get published asking your senators to co-sponsor global malnutrition legislation

All children deserve a strong start in life, regardless of where they are born. But five million children still die before their fifth birthday every year from preventable and treatable causes. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of [nearly half](#) of those deaths.

Malnutrition has devastating and lifelong consequences for children and their families. In 2020, nearly [150 million](#) children under five were stunted (too short for their age) and another [45 million](#) children were affected by wasting (too thin for their height). Both stunting and wasting are forms of malnutrition and indicate that a child has not received enough calories, nutrients, or both, to grow and develop to their full potential.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, progress on malnutrition was not happening quickly enough. Now, we are spiraling toward a full-blown nutrition crisis. After two years of COVID-19, economic downturn, strains on public health systems, and [record-setting](#) inflation on basic food items, we are backsliding on decades of progress. To make matters worse, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) [warns](#) that the global hunger crisis—exacerbated by the war in Ukraine—is pushing one child into life-threatening, severe malnutrition *every minute*.

Unlike many pressing global health challenges, we don't need to spend years or billions of dollars to find a cure for malnutrition. We know what works to prevent and treat malnutrition. But we need to ensure that life-sustaining and life-saving care are available to those who need it most. The first 1,000 days of life, from pregnancy to a child's second birthday, are a window of tremendous growth, opportunity, and risk. During this time, our brains and bodies grow more quickly than any other time of life. The effects of stunting in the first 1,000 days cannot be reversed—but they can be prevented if we act quickly.

As a leader in global health and development, the U.S. has been instrumental in reducing the number of countries with extremely high prevalence of child malnutrition. Progress is possible, but we need politicians to prioritize nutrition and act quickly.

Take Action: The House has passed the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021, and we need the Senate to follow suit now that the legislation has also passed through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This legislation directs the U.S. Agency for International Development to prioritize increasing coverage of high-impact and scientifically proven nutrition treatments for the vulnerable populations that need them most. In addition to robust funding to end malnutrition, we need to ensure our funding is spent on highly effective and evidence-based programs that will really move the needle on reducing malnutrition, preventing disability, and saving lives. Write a letter to the editor, calling on your senators ask leadership to bring this legislation to the floor for a vote.

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Sample Letter to the Editor in EPIC Format

Consider organizing a group outreach activity by inviting RESULTS group members, Action Network members, and others who care about these issues to write letters as well. [Find a sample meeting agenda online.](#)

Subject: The Senate must support the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021

Engage: In 2020, nearly 150 million children under five were stunted (too short for their age) and over forty-five million were affected by wasting (too thin for their height). Both stunting and wasting are forms of severe malnutrition and indicate that a child has not received adequate calories, nutrients, or both, to grow and develop to their full potential.

State Problem: We know what works to fight malnutrition, but the global community has failed to prioritize nutrition in funding and policy priorities. Less than 1 percent of total global official development assistance goes toward nutrition, and the COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, and global food price crisis has only made the state of global nutrition more perilous.

Inform: The bipartisan Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021 ([H.R.4693/S.2956](#)) better positions USAID, our country's main international development agency, to support countries to save more lives. The legislation focuses on accountable and transparent means of increasing coverage for high impact, proven and affordable interventions, including providing prenatal vitamins, breastfeeding support, vitamin A supplementation for young kids, and emergency therapeutic foods to treat life-threatening severe malnutrition.

Call to Action: I call on my senators to ask leadership to bring the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021 to the floor for a vote. Our state must provide leadership on this urgent need in the world. Time is of the essence.

Additional resources, if your group would like to explore the impact their advocacy has on global health. You can share your screen on Zoom.

- *Helpful and inspiring recording of a 2022 RESULTS International Conference session on global child nutrition:* <https://tinyurl.com/2022ICChildNutritionSession>
- *Powerful video on malnutrition's impact on lives and futures:* <https://ccga.ccgclients.com/hagirso/>