

May 2024 Action Sheet, Global Poverty

Ask Congress to co-sponsor the bipartisan resolutions on global vaccines

Vaccines are essential for helping kids survive and thrive. Increasing access to routine vaccines during childhood is a big reason why fewer kids are dying around the world. But even though last year was a record low year for child deaths, almost 5 million children still died before their fifth birthday. And we are not on track to end preventable child deaths — yet. COVID arrested progress on vaccine access, and we still haven't caught up to 2019 vaccination levels. This means not enough kids are getting vaccines or are not getting them on time. Last year, 14 million kids missed out on the most basic vaccines and about 10 million received no vaccines at all! We can and must do better.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is a global partnership that focuses on increasing access to vaccines in lower-income countries. Since it was created in 2000, Gavi has supported countries to vaccinate more than 1 billion children. Over the years, Gavi's work has been important in cutting down number of children who die from vaccine-preventable diseases. Gavi negotiates lower prices for vaccines and helps get the newest vaccines to countries faster. They also support strengthening health systems and immunization programs in eligible countries. Today, it costs \$18 per child to fully immunize children in low-income countries, reduced from \$24 in 2013.

Since 2010, Gavi has helped introduce new vaccines to fight two of most deadly diseases for kids: pneumonia and diarrhea. Now, we finally have vaccines against another leading killer: malaria. Malaria kills more than 600,000 people a year, mostly children in Africa. Gavi is preparing to support over 20 African countries to introduce these ground-breaking vaccines. U.S. support for Gavi is as critical now as ever.

There is a long history of bipartisan support for Gavi, and the U.S. is a major donor and leader. Unfortunately, for the past six years, U.S. government funding to Gavi for childhood immunization has been flat. This means Gavi received around the same amount of funding each year, despite inflation. Now, Gavi is preparing to support countries to recover from lost progress on routine immunization due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They are gearing up to deepen efforts to reach all children who have not received any doses of vaccines, introduce new life-saving malaria vaccines, and support the sustainable growth of vaccine manufacturing in Africa. It's essential that the U.S. and other donors come to the table with increased funding to achieve these important goals.

That's where you come in. Ask your senators and representative to co-sponsor the bipartisan Gavi resolution. (In the Senate, it's S.Res. 684. A similar resolution is coming soon in the House.)

Sample Letter to Member of Congress and/or Foreign Policy Aide in EPIC Format

Consider organizing a group or community action-taking activity to call on your members of Congress to take action. Invite RESULTS group members, Action Network members, people from your state's warm leads list, and others who care about these issues to write to and call your congressional legislators. You can find a [sample meeting agenda here](#).

Subject: Please support the Gavi resolution on global vaccines

Engage: Shockingly, last year almost 5 million children worldwide died before their fifth birthday.

State Problem: A leading cause of death is a lack of access to basic health services. Last year, 14 million kids missed out on the most basic vaccines. We cannot stand for this, especially when vaccines are a cost-effective way to save lives.

Inform: Since 2010, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has helped improve access and introduce new vaccines to fight killers like pneumonia and diarrhea. We now have a vaccine for malaria.

Call to Action: Gavi is preparing to support over 20 African countries to introduce the new malaria vaccine and help others vaccinate low- and no-dose children for these insidious child killers. Will you co-sponsor the bipartisan Gavi (S.Res. 684/similar resolution coming soon in the House)? It will send a message to the Administration and the rest of the world that we need to act now.