RESULTS Print Media: Global Poverty
January 1 - July 11, 2024
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<td>6/21/24</td>
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<td>Call members of Congress and urge support of vaccine funding</td>
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Arizona media
In the United States, we are lucky enough to have public education programs that nurture student’s education which in turn produces generations of leaders and economic growth. While we show appreciation for educators in our own country, we have to acknowledge the fact that nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of 10-year olds globally are unable to read (Unicef). These children are not being given the basic necessary skills to become lifelong learners. Children globally deserve the foundational educational necessities. Future wages increase an average of 10 percent for each year of school completed (World Bank). The READ Act ensures the U.S. government will continue to update and report on their strategy to improve foundational literacy and numeracy in basic education around the globe. On Nov. 6, the Senate passed the READ Act and sent it to the House of Representatives, where it has wide, bipartisan support, but awaits committee consideration and passage into law. We urge house members to use legislative measures in supporting children’s basic educational necessities.

— Karina Garavito, Foothills

Do your part

June 10, 2024

Re: the June 1 article “Stand up for safer future — my wife, Laura Conover has.”

Aubrey Conover makes good points about people needed to stand up for our country. In addition to running for office, we can question candidates and follow up when they are elected. Using our voices to make sure they know what matters, like the bipartisan Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act that would help millions of families currently struggling in poverty. Or what about asking President Biden for a bold pledge to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, that has provided vaccine for a billion children so far, saving millions of lives. Perhaps the best way is to call on your Senators (202-224-3121) to pass this bill and call on the president for bold Gavi support. It will take all of us to empower our government to take the road to a better country and a better world, please do your part.

— Willie Dickerson, Northwest side

Congress, Biden administration urged to back Gavi

June 16, 2024

With the COVID vaccine, a new malaria vaccine and a tuberculosis vaccine in development, we are seeing a renaissance in disease prevention. However, we will squander their lifesaving power if they never reach the communities that need them the most. We have seen the effects of this shortfall: In 2022, 4.9 million children younger than the age of 5 died due mostly to preventable health problems such as diarrhea, pneumonia and measles.

Fortunately, there is a proven strategy to remedy this. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is an international partnership that provides essential support for locally led vaccine programs worldwide. Since its inception, Gavi has helped vaccinate over 1 billion children around the world, saving 17.3 million lives.

World leaders are coming together to reinvest in Gavi this year. To help set the tone for the global community, I urge Congress and the Biden administration to make a bold, multyear pledge for Gavi of no less than $1.4 billion over the next four years. Let's make sure our medical innovations are actually put to work preventing the diseases they aim to end.

— Rayna Castillo, Flagstaff

https://azdailysun.com/opinion/letters/letter-to-the-editor-congress-biden-administration-urged-to-back-gavi/article_98687b2c-29b5-11ef-b0bd-775e8f61c29b.html
California media
Demand funding for global health, nutrition

March 8, 2024

Friday marks International Women's Day. Although we are far from perfect in the United States regarding the social and institutional disparities between males and females, the situation is much more dire in many other countries. It is especially disconcerting when these disparities undermine the health and education of girls, and are completely avoidable.

Our government has consistently been a strong partner in global anti-poverty funding for programs such as Global Maternal and Child Health and Global Nutrition. Our members of Congress must provide bold funding levels in their fiscal year 2025 spending bill. Let's make it more than a day for the women of the world.

— Ricardo Narvaez, Concord

https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2024/03/07/letters-1642/

Reprinted in:

The Mercury News
https://www.mercurynews.com/2024/03/07/letters-1642/
Democrats, GOP should agree on health care

March 13, 2024

Re: “Demand funding for global health, nutrition” (Page A6, March 8).

Thanks for publishing Ricardo Narvaez’s letter on International Women’s Day. It seems to me that there’s a lot of common ground between liberals who want to protect women’s health and conservatives who want to protect babies’ lives and, presumably, the lives of mothers who’ll take care of those babies and children already born.

Sadly, mothers dying during and within a year of childbirth is unnecessarily high. In the United States, the maternal mortality rate (the number of deaths per 100,000 births) is 32.9 and globally it’s 223.

I hope that the common ground mentioned above leads Congress to increase international child and maternal health funding to at least $1.15 billion in next year’s budget. Protecting the lives of babies, children and mothers through better health care is something we should all support.

— Jim Driggers, Concord

https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2024/03/12/letters-1648/

Reprinted in:

The Mercury News
https://www.mercurynews.com/2024/03/12/letters-1648/
Lee's legacy marked by love and kindness

March 15, 2024

Re: “Lee will leave inspired legacy” (Page A1, March 10).

I was moved by John Woolfolk’s article on Rep. Barbara Lee’s life and legacy after 25 years in Congress.

I consider her a champion in ending poverty. Her wisdom and patience in pushing for effective programs such as the Global Fund to Fight Aids, TB and Malaria, and global vaccination programs (way before COVID), as well as U.S. tax policies like the Child Tax Credit to help people lift themselves out of poverty saved millions of lives. I will miss her as my representative in Congress and hope her successor will be as effective and persistent in her work with congressional colleagues on both sides of the aisle as well as with constituents to fund and expand those worthwhile programs.

Thank you, Rep. Lee, for your love and kindness.

— Susan Oehser, Oakland

https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2024/03/14/letters-1652/

Reprinted in:

The Mercury News
https://www.mercurynews.com/2024/03/14/letters-1652/
Colorado media
Democracy in action

June 10, 2024

Ms. Ochs’ challenging trip to Washington shows how a determined advocate can create more understanding with members of Congress, hopefully leading to action (“Ms. Ochs goes to Washington,” May 28). That is democracy in action.

Any of us can make this trip to the nation’s capital to meet and speak with our members of Congress to advocate for things that make a difference. Whether it is advocating to expand and protect the SNAP program, ensuring a bold pledge to fund Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance — improving access to vaccines for children in the poorest countries — or encouraging the Senate to pass the bipartisan Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act helping millions of families that are struggling in poverty, it matters.

Ms. Ochs’ inspiration reminds us we all have the privileges and responsibilities of living in a democracy.

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington

https://boulderweekly.com/opinion/letters-june10/
Connecticut media
Feeding the hungry is not charity. It’s an investment

By Sandra Eagle

May 8, 2024

Right now is when Congress is making its decisions of where to spend the $7.3 trillion of the federal budget.

I am a volunteer lobbyist for the anti-poverty movement, working through the organization Results.

Even before the pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and Benjamin Netanyahu’s manmade famine of Gaza, 16,000 babies 4 years old and under died every day of starvation and treatable diseases because their families have no access to treatment. We work to get Congress to fund the initiatives that create health care systems, educate children, offer economic opportunity, and end the epidemics of Tuberculosis (the largest infectious killer), AIDS, malaria, preventing them from becoming epidemic in our country. These programs used to be part of the Department of Defense, as stronger countries are more powerful allies for us. And none of this is charity, rather investment, as these countries make up two-thirds of our trade partners, and for every dollar we invest we get $3 in trade.

These programs are no longer under the Department of Defense, now coming under the budget for the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID.

We also lobby to fund the domestic initiatives to address the horror that one out of five American children go to bed hungry, the tremendous problem of homelessness in our country, job opportunities and training, fair taxation, and support for Medicare, social security, Medicaid, education, needed in the United States.

The view of Results is that we have long had the resources to end hunger, and that what we are missing is the political will to do so.
In 2023 we had the political will to award just short of a trillion dollars ($994.6 billion) to the pentagon. The Department of Defense failed its audit for the sixth time in a row that year, failing to account for $1.9 trillion, a full half of its $3.8 trillion budget. The Department of Defense is the only federal agency that has never passed a full audit. We have this political will despite glaring misuse of the funds that can be accounted for, here two examples.

1. A report from Quincy Institute, a nonprofit think tank, is the first detailed examination of the pentagon's Secretary of Defense Executive Fellows (SDEF) program. It found that:

“Decades of SDEF recommendations have consistently focused on reforms that would both benefit corporations and bolster their influence over the Defense Department.”

The report exposes the SDEF as the private arms industry influencing the military's operations, blurring the lines between what is in the public interest, and what is serving private interest, and placing corporate profit as the unseen driver of U.S. military strategy.

2. Only 30% of F-35 fighter jets can perform, and despite years of failures we have the political will to sign off this year on full-rate production of the F-35, at a cost of $2 trillion per plane, and allowing the pentagon to move to classify the findings on its combat effectiveness.

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.”

— Dwight D. Eisenhower (who warned us of the military-industrial complex)

The members of the Connecticut delegation (Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Sen. Chris Murphy, Representatives Rosa DeLauro, Jim Himes, Jahana Hayes, Joe Courtney and John Larson) are good-hearted, ethical, human beings, and are joined now by 100 congressional progressives, who understand that “Extreme poverty anywhere, is a threat to human security everywhere” (Kofi Annan).

You are the people who make for the political will. It is in your hands to get this job done! Not to just sign letters but to become a resounding voice, a stand, that we have
no ethical right to say we have trillions to waste, but not enough to feed, house, and educate our own children, not enough to feed the starving children and families who are our allies, and at the risk of sparking epidemics that would overwhelm our economy and collapse our health care system, as COVID had us experience.

FY2025 budget requests $1.15 billion for USAid Maternal and Child Health, $1 billion for USAid Tuberculosis, $1.65 billion for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, 1.15 billion USAid Basic Education (less than $5 billion compared with $994.6 billion, more than half of the latter regularly unaccounted for).

Domestically, pass the Child Tax Credit, oppose cuts to SNAP, and any efforts to weaken or privatize Medicare and Social Security.

*Stamford resident Sandra Eagle is a volunteer with Results.org.*


*Reprinted in:*

CT INSIDER

ctpost

greenwich time

THE REGISTER CITIZEN

newstimes

NEW HAVEN REGISTER

THE HOUR
Florida media
Congress must support vaccine alliance

June 18, 2024

The COVID-19 vaccine, a new malaria vaccine and a tuberculosis vaccine mark a new renaissance in disease prevention. However, their impact is lost if they don't reach those in need. Over 10 million children worldwide have never received essential vaccines, and in 2022, 4.9 million children under five died from preventable health issues like diarrhea, pneumonia, and measles. From Jan.1, 2020, to March 28, 2024, 338 U.S. measles cases were reported, mainly among unvaccinated individuals, with 29% occurring in early 2024. In February, an outbreak in a Broward County elementary school resulted in nine confirmed cases, highlighting the importance of vaccination. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has saved over 17.3 million children by supporting local vaccine programs. World leaders are reinvesting in Gavi; Congress and the Biden Administration must urgently follow suit and make a bold funding pledge. I urge our Florida lawmakers to follow Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar's footsteps, who's leading the House resolution on Gavi. Let's ensure our medical innovations prevent the diseases they target.

— Nayade Caldes Miramar

https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2024/06/18/letters-where-is-the-florida-guard-support-vaccines-value-of-education/
Indiana media
Stop tuberculosis with End TB Now

January 28, 2024

Congress often punts on legislation in an election year. But in this election year, passing the End TB Now Act is an opportunity to shore up key public investments against partisan winds.

Tuberculosis is the leading killer among diseases worldwide, and its impact is measurable in our country as higher rates of TB among foreign-born denizens (who are commonplace around Northwest Indiana). The End Tuberculosis Now Act, introduced by Sen. Young and cosponsored by Sen. Braun, will require USAID to coordinate with federal agencies to update and implement programs for the global prevention, treatment and eradication of tuberculosis. It also requires USAID to contribute to the World Health Organization and other international organizations for such initiatives.

Currently USAID is following these guidelines, but giving them the force of law assures continued investments needed to hold an international disease at bay before it crosses our borders regardless of partisan whims.

— Oscar Lanzi, Chicago

https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/letters/oscar-lanzi/article_0779df56-b73d-11ee-ab0f-8b5fc9c76a1d.html
Maine media
If your social media feed is anything like mine, you likely saw myriad posts and articles on Friday, March 8, in honor of International Women’s Day. Each year, we recognize International Women’s Day and designate March as Women’s History Month in order to focus on women’s rights, gender equality, and more. If you’re like me, you’ve also likely wondered what more we can do to spread awareness and have an impact on women and girls in the United States and across the globe.

Education is a key way to help level the playing field for women. According to the United Nations, globally, women make up two-thirds of the population who are unable to read or write, and rural girls make up the smallest group to attend secondary school. For girls who are able to attain an education, each year of school is a significant predictor of later economic success. In a world where women are underpaid and undervalued, education can make a difference. Invest in global education to honor and support women’s rights during Women’s History Month.

Each March also brings conversation about the federal budget and the appropriations process. Investing in basic education and funding global organizations fighting for gender equity in education and beyond is essential. As our representatives discuss this year’s budget, I urge them and any citizens passionate about women’s rights to fund global education this month and every month.

─ Natalie Jones, Stockton Springs

https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/03/12/opinion/letters/letter-fund-global-education-to-support-women/
Maryland media
Continued U.S. investment in life-saving vaccines is essential

Vaccines protecting children against measles, mumps and rubella virus are commonplace in U.S. but not so in poorer countries.

By Baltimore Sun Editorial Board

May 17, 2024

The phrase, “make the world a better place,” is used so commonly that it can seem devoid of meaning. It can be found in song lyrics, in canned food drives, anti-litter campaigns and even in support of military intervention abroad. But sometimes there are opportunities where the United States, as a nation, can have an undeniably positive impact on parts of the world that direly need our help. Such is the case with U.S.-supported vaccine distribution to developing countries. A recent study, led by the World Health Organization, finds that since 1974, international efforts to prevent infectious disease have saved 154 million lives, most of them children.

This week, Maryland U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin introduced a bipartisan resolution calling for continued support for the public-private partnership known as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the purchase of vaccines for such diseases as measles, cholera and yellow fever. As chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Cardin’s call (along with that of Mississippi Republican Sen. Roger Wicker, the committee’s ranking member) should carry weight. Gavi’s track record is too good to ignore, and it includes steering countries, as their finances improve, toward paying for a greater share of this essential medical service.

In a recent meeting with The Baltimore Sun Editorial Board, volunteers with the anti-poverty group RESULTS and Dr. Theopista Jacob Masenge, a Tanzanian pediatrician, pointed out that not only will those vaccinations save lives but help prevent the spread of diseases, including measles and tuberculosis, which threaten the U.S. as well. There is already enough death and destruction in the world from wars and malnutrition without allowing preventable diseases to become plagues. One child with measles is capable of spreading it to as many as 18 others. We can think of few more sensible — and, frankly, more noble — government expenditures than providing kids with much-needed vaccinations.
Baltimore Sun editorial writers offer opinions and analysis on news and issues relevant to readers. They operate separately from the newsroom.

[This editorial resulted from a media call organized by RESULTS and our Maryland volunteers.]

https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/05/17/u-s-investment-in-vaccines/
Bravo to the Baltimore Sun Editorial Board for its reasoned support of childhood vaccinations (“Continued U.S. investment in life-saving vaccines is essential,” May 17). Bravo, too, to U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin for co-sponsoring a resolution that supports continued funding for the public-private partnership GAVI. GAVI to date has saved over 17 million children through locally-led vaccine programs around the world.

Yet in 2022, 4.9 million children under the age of 5 died due mostly to preventable health problems like diarrhea, pneumonia and measles. That did not have to be. We have the vaccines to prevent or lessen the impact of these diseases! And the vaccines don’t even cost much.

Later this year, GAVI will need renewed financial commitment. Funding for GAVI will not only prevent further waste of precious human capital, it will protect us here in Baltimore. In a world where people travel everywhere every day, Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore, Baltimore Pennsylvania Station or any private car can bring disease to us.

U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen, U.S. Rep. Kweisi Mfume, and all the Maryland delegation to Congress, please support a multi-year funding pledge to GAVI. It will inspire other countries to contribute, too. When more children are vaccinated, all of us will be safer.

— Jan Kleinman, Baltimore

https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/05/21/congress-should-fund-vaccinations-in-readers-commentary/
Mississippi media
Grassroots anti-poverty movement seeks to sprout in Mississippi

June 14, 2024

Though Errolyn Gray grew up in West Point, and lives in Columbus, as a senior associate for the grassroots anti-poverty movement Results, she hopes to have an impact that goes beyond the Golden Triangle.

Gray spoke to the Exchange Club of Columbus during the club’s Thursday meeting about the national lobbyist movement and said she is working to establish a branch of Results in Mississippi.

“Our mission at Results is really just to alleviate poverty,” Gray said. “It’s a movement of passionate, committed everyday people — just like everyone in this room — and together we use our voices to influence political decisions which will bring an end to poverty.”

Gray said the national Results movement is almost 44 years old. It equips ordinary citizens to become volunteer advocates, training them to conduct meetings with their representatives in Congress to push for anti-poverty legislation around housing, tax policy, health care and more.

Over time, she said, the volunteer advocates build trust and relationships with their representatives, as educated community members.

“We don't expect anybody to come in as an expert on Gavi and vaccines, and all these different bills, but we give our advocates everything they need to go talk about these things in a way that lets Congress know they know what they're talking about,” Gray said. “And eventually, that yields influence.”

Gray said volunteers in each state meet once a month to make sure they are on the same page about strategic actions, including participating in outreach events, having
lobby meetings with congressional offices, putting together media publications and more. Results also hosts monthly webinars for advocates across the country.

Gray said national volunteer advocates have seen some recent successes, as they pushed for the Global Malnutrition and Treatment Act, which passed in October 2022. She said Results advocates also pushed for a federal commitment to reach 45 million people worldwide with tuberculosis testing and treatment that passed in September 2023, and the Child Tax Credit Expansion, which passed in the House in 2024.

In 2024, Gray said, Results has also focused on a national campaign for direct file tax programs, which helps citizens file their taxes directly with the IRS without a middleman, helping to keep money in the pockets of lower income families.

Gray started working for Results in 2021. She manages five states for the group, including Mississippi, Louisiana, Rhode Island, Maine and Hawaii. The approach for gathering volunteers varies by state, she said, and establishing a group in Mississippi has required her to get “creative” with the structure.

In some states, she said, volunteers gather in hub cities, while in others, they only meet over Zoom. She is still working to identify which structure would work best for Mississippi residents.

“I do have advocates spread throughout the state,” Gray said. “I just need to get everyone together on one accord, and of course, the invitation is always out there to get more people in.”

Throughout Results’ existence, Gray said, the movement has focused on national-level policies. But in 2025, the group hopes to begin focusing on state-level work as well.

Gray said she has been traveling around the state, talking with interested parties about what matters most to them to end poverty. One issue she is considering for Mississippi’s 2025 focus is the grocery tax, though she is still open to ideas from outside sources.

Gray said Results also has an international presence, which works to advocate for many of the same values globally. Results always advocates for global health, nutrition and education, she said.
Missouri media
Fight against HIV/AIDS should have bipartisan support

January 14, 2024

I wholeheartedly agree with columnist Stephanie Hein (“Civility in politics is the legacy we ought to be leaving our children,” Dec. 31), who emphasizes the need to put aside partisanship and work together.

One area which has historically enjoyed bipartisan support is global health. A prime example is the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (“PEPFAR”), a program started by President George W. Bush in 2003, at a time when AIDS was ravaging the planet. Since then, with Congressional support across party lines, PEPFAR has saved over 25 million lives, and has allowed 5.5 million babies to be born HIV-free.

Unfortunately, HIV/AIDS is still a crisis; someone new is infected every 30 seconds. While much progress has been made, the fight continues. PEPFAR is now up for Congressional reauthorization, a process which has become bogged down in partisan bickering. It is critical that Missouri Senators Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt embody the bipartisanship which this live-saving program has previously enjoyed and vote for a clean five-year reauthorization of PEPFAR.

— Greg Campbell, Creve Coeur

Civility in politics message can be applied to Congress

January 21, 2024

As a mother and an author of a book about why moms make great advocates called “From Changing Diapers to Changing the World,” I applaud Stephanie Hein’s message. (“Civility in Politics is the legacy we ought to be leaving for our children,” Dec. 31).

Moms are often primary teachers for kids learning to be decent and kind. We can bring this positive energy to Congress with solutions to the world's biggest problems.

I've advocated to my members of Congress about global health for 18 years. I took my children along from their toddler to teen years to show them what constructive and respectful dialogue looks like in Washington D.C. and local offices.

Now that my kids are adults, they fully comprehend the dangers of diseases like tuberculosis, which is still untreated in impoverished areas of the world. This year, we continue to promote bills like the End TB Now Act (H.R. 1776, S. 288).

But you don't need to be a parent to engage in non-partisan advocacy. You can join us now by calling Senators Hawley and Schmitt and asking them to co-sponsor the End TB Now Act. Your act of civility can save lives!

— Cynthia Changyit Levin, St. Louis

https://www.news-leader.com/story/opinion/readers/2024/01/21/letters-address-school-intruder-drills-civility-politics/72247845007/
Plague case in Western U.S. is reminder that funding vaccines is still critical

February 15, 2024

Reports of the bubonic plague in our Western states (“An Oregon resident was diagnosed with the plague,” published online Feb. 13) is a reminder that infectious diseases are a present threat whether we think about them or not.

Two diseases far more common than the plague and on the rise are tuberculosis and measles. We need continued funding support from Congress to fight them in the U.S. and in developing countries around the world.

America’s investments in international development and humanitarian support make up less than 1% of the federal budget and yield an extraordinary return. Not only is it the morally right thing to do to help impoverished people, but it directly benefits American taxpayers by protecting us from infectious diseases.

I ask Sens. Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt, and Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer to protect foreign assistance in this year’s appropriations process and support the highest possible levels of funding for global vaccines programs for next year.

_Cynthia Changyit Levin is a resident of Town and Country and the author of “From Changing Diapers to Changing the World: Why Moms Make Great Advocates and How to Get Started.”_

U.S. humanitarian funding also protects national security

February 20, 2024

It's hard to get anything done in an election year, but the Senate managed to pass an aid package to address national security issues. ("Senate passes $95.3 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan after rare all-night session," Feb. 13.)

I hope Congress makes every effort to keep up U.S. leadership in fighting extreme poverty and preventable disease, which also promotes national security. America's investments in international development and humanitarian support make up less than 1% of the federal budget and yield an extraordinary return. Not only is it the morally right thing to do to help impoverished people, but it directly benefits American taxpayers by protecting us from infectious diseases.

I ask Sens. Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt, and Reps. Ann Wagner Cori Bush, to protect foreign assistance in this year's appropriations process and support the highest possible levels of funding for global vaccines programs for next year.

— Cynthia Changyit Levin, Town and Country

https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/letters/letter-u-s-humanitarian-funding-also-protects-national-security/article_964c0a82-cf80-11ee-be85-1bb86ba9c82e.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share
Congress should support international immunization programs

February 21, 2024

Best of luck to STEM students who will get to share their love of science at the SciFest Engineering Expo Feb. 24. It's so important to celebrate and encourage science in our communities because decisions that affect our health are made by our elected officials that should be based in science fact. Vaccine funding is a good example of that.

Our members of Congress should support investments in international development that include immunization efforts. Such programs make up less than 1% of the federal budget and yield extraordinary return. Not only is it the morally right thing to do to help impoverished people, but it directly benefits American taxpayers by protecting us from infectious diseases.

I ask Senator Hawley, Senator Schmitt and Representative Smith to protect foreign assistance in this year’s appropriations process and support the highest possible levels of funding for global vaccines programs for next year.

— Cynthia Changyit Levin, Town and Country

https://www.phelpscountyfocus.com/opinion/article_178d5f4c-d0d5-11ee-88a1-1713bcfdd8fa.html
Lawmakers need to back global health measures

May 27, 2024

I admire Barbara Leonhard for the way she turned her past life-threatening illness as motivation to speak out in support of immunizations. (“Measles survivor becomes vaccine champion,” Columbia Missourian, May 21)

Sadly, her experience as a child contracting measles is still far too common today in countries without easy access to vaccines.

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. Now, Gavi is preparing to deepen efforts to reach all zero-dose children, introduce new life-saving malaria vaccines and support the sustainable growth of vaccine manufacturing in Africa.

But it needs strong U.S. leadership at this fall’s international Gavi replenishment conference to do so.

Sens. Hawley and Schmitt should co-sponsor the bipartisan Senate resolution SR 684 to show congressional support for Gavi.

Strong Senate backing would send a message to President Biden that the U.S. should make a generous pledge that continues America’s position as a world leader in global health. Every child deserves a healthy start to life.

— Cynthia Levin lives in Town and Country, Missouri.

https://www.columbiamissourian.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/letter-to-the-editor-lawmakers-need-to-back-global-health-measures/article_491b5a1e-1a27-11ef-898a-7b944ad257c4.html
A Global Partnership To Increase Access To Vaccines

July 8, 2024

I enjoy the annual tradition of watching the Webster Groves Fourth of July parade with friends, but there's nothing more patriotic than participating in our democracy! Our greatest privilege is the ability to contact elected officials to tell them our best ideas about our shared values. This year, I remind our leaders that compassion is an American value and U.S. humanitarian leadership shows strength more than dropping bombs.

In our world where 1.5 million children die annually from vaccine-preventable diseases, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is a global partnership that focuses on increasing access to vaccines in lower-income countries. The U.S. has been a supporter of Gavi since its creation in 2000, helping to vaccinate over 1 billion children in low-income countries.

In June, the U.S. pledged at least $1.58 billion to Gavi over the next five years. Now, Congress can build on that promise by cosigning bipartisan resolutions supporting Gavi (S.Res.684/H.Res 1286) and increasing funding for Gavi in this year's annual spending bills. Senators Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt, and Representatives Cori Bush and Ann Wagner should get on the record by co-signing the Gavi resolutions to reflect Missourians’ compassion and humanity.

— Cynthia Changyit Levin, Town and Country

https://www.timesnewspapers.com/webster-kirkwoodtimes/a-global-partnership-to-increase-access-to-vaccines/article_a3558662-3944-11ef-9778-3782c7454ad3.html
End tuberculosis

January 1, 2024

As we head into winter’s cold and flu season, it’s important to remember that the world’s deadliest respiratory disease is sadly alive and well.

Tuberculosis is often thought of as a disease of the past, but TB killed 1.6 million in 2021.

When it comes to fighting disease, vigilance is required. That’s why Congress needs to pass the End TB Now Act as soon as possible. This bill would require the U.S. to prioritize TB resources to areas around the world most affected by the disease and set up a process and measures to track success. The longer we wait, the more people will die.

Covid-19 showed us that no country is immune from the spread of disease. But it also has shown us that when we work together, we can save lives. I urge our members of Congress, Sens. Jon Tester and Steve Daines, and Reps. Matt Rosendale and Ryan Zinke to quickly pass the End TB Now Act and get on track to finally ending this terrible disease.

— Karen Cunningham, West Glacier

North Dakota media
It's time to protect the next generation from stress

The Gallup 2023 Global Emotions Report showed stress is at near record levels around the world.

By Kathleen Ness

June 12, 2024

For at least a half century, researchers have been investigating what impact stress has on our health and what to do to mitigate it, a topic the National Geographic recently highlighted (June 2024, volume 245). For example, an American Psychological Association (APA) survey in 2023 indicated that the incidence of chronic illnesses and mental health problems are increasing, particularly among those 35 to 44. And Americans are not alone. The Gallup 2023 Global Emotions Report showed stress is at near record levels around the world. Leading neurobiologists, Huda Akil and Eric J. Nestler, call it a second pandemic, the sequel to COVID-19, political instability, climate change and economic stress.

When we have a sense of control over our lives, stress can be managed. Unsurprisingly, severe stress occurs more frequently among marginalized populations, living in impoverished communities unequipped to address it. Our public policy should respond to this urgent crisis.

**HOUSING**

To thrive, the basic needs of children must be met. Housing stability is foremost. Homelessness undermines a child's ability to develop normally, undermining rapid brain development, which can have long-term negative effects on physical and emotional health. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is our largest federally funded affordable housing program for extremely low-income renters, but it is not fully funded. As the Zero to Three, 2023 report indicates, 75% of low-income renters who are caring for a child at home and need help do not receive it. The Grand Forks
Herald noted 106 students enrolled in our public schools were homeless at the beginning of this past school year.

Unaffordable housing can be addressed by a refundable tax credit modeled after the Child Tax Credit (CTC), which boosts household resources and cut U. S. child poverty nearly in half under temporary enhancements in 2021.

**FOOD**

Besides housing, children need regular, nutritious food. The North Dakota Legislature approved a $6 million appropriation last year to provide families of four with incomes at or below $60,000 with free school lunch. Now we need Congress to better fund SNAP so children can have adequate nutrition at home.

Every five years, Congress passes the Farm Bill. This law governs farming and food policies in the United States. Through the Farm Bill, SNAP provides direct assistance to those experiencing food insecurity. The average daily SNAP benefit received is about $7 a day. These limited resources have an outsized impact on the lives of low-income Americans—over 80% of recipients are families with children, older Americans, and persons with disabilities. Increasing SNAP benefits would help mitigate stress.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

The Grand Forks Herald has drawn attention to the high recidivism rates in our local jail and the connection to illicit drug use. It is well documented that these numbers will diminish if we focus on proven prevention and rehabilitation practices. But that requires a strong commitment to prevention.

We can look to Iceland, which went from having the highest rate of adolescent drug use among a group of northern European countries in the 1990s to the lowest. A coalition of social scientists, policy makers, mental health practitioners, and community members collaborated to identify at-risk adolescents, increase parental involvement, and provide at-risk youth with constructive after school activities, among other interventions. They centered their focus on the public schools as a way for the community to bolster youth mental health, and it worked. Perhaps we should learn from them.
GLOBAL HEALTH

When the world can come together to create effective treatments and vaccines for a deadly novel virus, there is no excuse for children dying of preventable, treatable conditions like malnutrition or diarrhea. Yet in 2022, 4.9 million children under the age of 5 died largely of preventable causes. And the global food crisis for women and girls, especially, is increasing according to UNICEF.

Children should not have to suffer from things we can easily prevent. I urge our lawmakers to boost funding for global child health, to provide access to good nutrition, lifesaving vaccines, and more. For pennies on the dollar, we can help save millions of young lives. The US was once instrumental in prioritizing global child survival. It’s time to step up again.

GLOBAL EDUCATION

Finally, we need to invest in global education. The READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 has been introduced in both the House and passed in the Senate (H.R. 681, S.41) This legislation would reauthorize the original 2017 READ Act, promoting global equity in access to education. This is particularly crucial for girls, and will improve the U.S.’s ability to achieve key global education goals.

I ask our members of Congress, Senators John Hoeven and Keven Cramer, and Congressman Kelly Armstrong to join with colleagues across the political aisle to pass legislation that protects the upcoming generation from overwhelming stress.

Kathleen Ness, of Grand Forks, is a volunteer who lobbies Congress to pass legislation that addresses poverty.

Oregon media
More Support for International Affairs

July 3, 2024

Jayna Yoo is so right about the critical importance of our International Affairs Budget for global well being and peace. (EW online letters, 6/27). Her letter calls for Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley to support this effort. Kudos to both of them for their work in this area. Currently they could co-sponsor Senate Resolution 684 supporting Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Since 2000, Gavi has vaccinated 1 billion children and saved 17.3 million lives. Gavi now wants to reach another 500 million children with life-saving vaccines over the next five years, saving another 8 million. Yes, those are amazing numbers that create hope and help end the unnecessary deaths of millions of children. And this is just a small part of the international aid budget that is less than 2 percent of America’s total budget. So take a moment to contact Wyden and Merkley, 202-224-3121, and ask them to take actions to make Gavi’s life-saving work continue.

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington

https://eugenewEEKLY.com/2024/07/03/more-bUTts-and-jake-brake-complaints-in-letters/
Tennessee media
To the Editor:

Breaking news: Congress adjourned without passing important legislation. OK, so that's not unusual at all. Left hanging are two pieces of foreign policy really deserve attention.

Education is the foundation of healthy families, a more prosperous future, and good governance. Yet according to a new UNESCO report, 250 million children were out of school in 2022, six million more than the previous year. The READ Act Reauthorization would mitigate this crisis by continuing proven policies that build strong partnerships and deliver results, particularly for girls and young people in conflict-ridden nations. The READ Act Reauthorization unanimously passed the Senate in November. House leaders should follow their lead and pass HR681.

We hear a lot about COVID, flu and RSV. But a different disease, tuberculosis, killed 1.6 million people in 2021. Most of the 10.5 million new cases last year were in low and middle-income countries. But, airborne like COVID, TB easily travels around the globe and can develop drug-resistant strains if not properly treated. The End TB Now Act would catalyze research for an effective vaccine and new drugs to fight resistance. It would strengthen coordination with other governments and global organizations, and set bold goals for detection, treatment and prevention. For accountability, Congress would require performance evaluations of supported programs and annual reports specifying impact.

These bills make our foreign development funds more effective while saving and improving lives. Congress should pass both these bills as soon as possible when it resumes in 2024.

— Anne Child, Oak Ridge

Texas media
A billionaire gambler gave Abbott $6 million. It's time for Texans to reclaim their democracy.

By Claudia Morgan and Sam Daley-Harris

January 19, 2024

A Pennsylvania billionaire gave Gov. Greg Abbott $6 million last month in the single largest donation in Texas political history, money the governor promises to employ in his reprisals against reasonable Republicans.

Texans must take their government back from the oligarchs who are showering our leaders with millions, and there's a manual on how to do it.

Abbott's new donor is Jeff Yass, a former professional gambler and co-founder of Susquehanna International Group, an investment firm specializing in options trading, another form of gambling. He is the 52nd wealthiest man in the world, worth $28.9 billion, according to Forbes, and he's obsessed with destroying public schools.

Abbott could not be prouder.

“With this substantial financial backing, Governor Abbott will ensure that the conservative candidates who support his bold agenda to expand school choice, secure our southern border, and lower property taxes have what they need to keep Texas red,” a campaign statement declared.

Yass is the Tim Dunn of Pennsylvania, a reclusive libertarian billionaire who uses loose campaign finance laws and secretive political action committees to drive his ideological agenda. Like Dunn, who recently pocketed billions more by selling his West Texas oil and gas company, he's not afraid to back the most extreme right wing characters.

Yass handed out $18 million to his favored candidates in Pennsylvania’s 2022 primary elections and is a heavy donor to the ultraconservative State Policy Network. The local chapter is the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a right wing group that strikes fear in every Republican politician.
Investigative journalism outfit ProPublica took a deep dive into how Yass has avoided paying $1 billion in taxes. Meanwhile, he called the COVID-19 pandemic a boon for his bottom line and invests in gambling websites that exploit addiction.

Abbott, who is not up for reelection this year, will spend some of the money to defeat rural Republicans who voted against his plan to provide taxpayer-funded private school vouchers and gut public school funding. Rural lawmakers recognize that public schools are the largest employers in their districts, which do not have private schools.

Yass’ gift doubles Dunn’s $3 million contribution to Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick’s campaign coffers through his Defend Texas Liberty PAC. Just as Patrick delivered an acquittal for Dunn’s handpicked attorney general, Ken Paxton, Yass hopes Abbott can deliver on school vouchers despite polls showing most Texans oppose them.

Such massive donations, extremist rhetoric and one-party rule have left most Texas voters disillusioned. A new Pew Research survey shows extreme partisanship is souring all Americans on our democracy.

“I feel like if I could get my voice out there more, I would be more involved,” one Republican-leaning woman told Pew. “I’m not one of the important people, you know what I mean?”

Sam Daley-Harris knows precisely how she feels, which is why he’s thoroughly updated his book, “Reclaiming Our Democracy.” The book provides a detailed guide to nonpartisan engagement with politicians of every stripe to demand they meet the needs of the people, not their billionaire donors.

Daley-Harris’ experience founding RESULTS, an anti-poverty nonprofit, in 1985 informs his tactics. The group trains volunteers to contact their elected officials, get appointments with them or their staff and make the case for common sense solutions.

RESULTS is good at alerting the media, too. Readers should know the Houston chapter gave me an award last year for my commentary on poverty and health issues.

Citizens are shocked to learn how responsive elected officials can be, especially if you offer an intelligent pitch instead of cursing at them. Politicians and journalists are swamped with emails and messages from professional communicators daily, and we don’t hear enough from regular folks who sincerely desire to better their community.
“The book aims to show people that when it comes to protecting our democracy, more is possible than just voting, as important as that is, or standing by and watching in horror,” Daley-Harris told me.

I sense that every person who tells me they hate politics and politicians is hungry for change. We can see it in the polls showing how much we disapprove of our leaders. We live it through low-turnout elections. Only 16% of Houston voters cast ballots in the mayoral runoff.

This year, we need angry and disillusioned citizens to speak up because, I promise you, that’s what the extremists and billionaires on all sides fear the most. A popular revolt by the center would take away their partisan power and replace it with the practically-minded democracy we all want.

https://link.houstonchronicle.com/view/5d2a1d76fc942d07dc18969ek9v2r.zp/30c8d7ba
House should take up measure addressing global education needs

January 29, 2024

Covid-19 interrupted learning for children all around the world. Millions of children could not access digital learning programs. Many have not yet returned to school. According to a UNESCO report, 250 million children were out of school in 2022, 6 million more than the previous year.

We must not allow a generation of children to miss out on a quality education. The READ Act Reauthorization (H.R. 681) seeks to address this global education challenge. It reauthorizes the original 2017 READ Act, which is a proven policy that delivers positive results, especially for girls and children in conflict areas.

The Senate has passed the bill. I call on Chairman Michael McCaul to move it to the floor of the House. Tell your representative you want them to support H.R. 681. The world's children deserve no less.

— Eloise Sutherland, Austin

Listen to Results

February 2, 2024

Texans must recognize their power as voters. Congress is accountable to us, the taxpayers, so we should advocate for change. Antipathy and apathy threaten our democracy, but we can overcome them.

Nonpartisan organizations like Results provide a platform for individuals to use their voices to influence political decisions. Results has local chapters in Dallas and Fort Worth, offering opportunities to engage and make a difference.

I encourage readers to join organizations like Results, research candidates and demand honesty and humility from our elected officials. Let’s reclaim our democracy and shape the future of our great state Texas and the country.

— Bukekile Dube, McKinney

Be a voter and an advocate

February 4, 2024

Re: “How We Can Reclaim Our Democracy — We have to be more discerning voters. Our Voter Guide can help you make a decision,” Wednesday editorial.

Apollo Astronaut Rusty Schweickart said: “We aren’t passengers on Spaceship Earth, we’re the crew. We aren’t residents on this planet, we’re citizens. The difference in both cases is responsibility.”

This editorial about voting and being informed is hugely important. But what about all the time between elections the days, weeks, and months afterward?

I recently read Sam Daley-Harris’ book, Reclaiming Our Democracy, and listened to Kris Boyd’s Think interview of Daley-Harris, “Why signing that online petition isn’t enough.” Daley-Harris founded the anti-poverty lobby Results in 1980 and Civic Courage in 2012.

Almost 15 years ago, a group of very ordinary Dallas folks joined Results and learned how to advocate effectively with our elected officials. Since then we have had members of Congress take 217 actions by meeting with them or their staff 252 times, generating 174 pieces of published media and holding 76 community events. It has been a transformational experience and not something I ever thought I could do.

So in addition to becoming a discerning voter, why not become an advocate? It would be a powerful way to make a difference while strengthening our democracy in the process.

— Margaret Smith, Dallas/Turtle Creek

International Women’s Day
March 8, 2024

International Women's Day on March 8 offers us a chance to unite in solidarity with women worldwide to expedite progress and tackle the challenges they confront in various crises. The world wrestles with severe poverty exacerbated by the pandemic, conflicts and the adverse effects of climate change, disproportionately affecting women and children and resulting in heightened poverty levels and limited access to vital services.

To avert further hardships, the United Nations urges the implementation of gender-responsive financing programs crucial for empowering women economically, enhancing maternal and child health, and safeguarding family well-being.

I urge readers to contact their members of Congress ahead of the fiscal year 2025 budget deliberations, advocating for funding that places a premium on combating poverty, improving maternal health and ensuring a brighter future for women and children globally.

— Bukekile Dube, McKinney

https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/03/08/letters-to-the-editor-authoritarian-rhetoric-ken-paxton-international-womens-day/
The U.S. can build on success in expanding global access to vaccines

June 9, 2024

Re: June 4 article, “Fauci grilled during COVID-19 hearing”

The article reminded me of my sister-in-law’s death in 2020 before COVID vaccines were available. Just this one infectious disease meant death for 1.1 million Americans.

Globally, almost 5 million children die annually before their fifth birthdays from diseases that can be prevents by a vaccine. For example, pneumonia kills more than 700,000 children annually even though a low-cost pneumococcal vaccine is available. (Did you get yours?)

Vaccines lead the pack in cost-effective interventions that can save lives and prevent illness. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has helped to vaccinate over 1 billion children, and has prevented more than 17.3 million child deaths since 2000.

The U.S. can build on Gavi’s success and expand access to life-saving vaccines by leading at the upcoming Gavi pledging conference, encouraging other nations to do their part. Senate resolution 684 urges support for Gavi. Will Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz co-sponsor and help save lives?

— Mark Coats, Austin

No online link
Utah media
Congress must make a bold investment in life-saving vaccines

June 18, 2024

With the COVID vaccine, a new malaria vaccine, and a tuberculosis vaccine in development, we are seeing a renaissance in disease prevention. But we squander their life-saving power if the vaccines never reach communities that need them most.

In 2022, 4.9 million children under the age of 5 died due mostly to preventable health problems like diarrhea, pneumonia and measles.

But there is a proven strategy to fix this. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is an international partnership that provides essential support for locally-led vaccine programs worldwide. Since its inception, Gavi has helped vaccinate over 1 billion children around the world, saving 17.3 million lives.

World leaders are coming together to reinvest in Gavi this year. To help set the tone for the global community, I urge Congress and the Biden administration to make a bold, multi-year pledge for Gavi of no less than $1.4 billion over the next four years. Let's make sure our medical innovations are actually put to work preventing the diseases they aim to end.

— Preston Waldrop, Salt Lake City

https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/letters/2024/06/18/letter-congress-must-make-bold/
Washington state media
Protest Bangladesh’s arrest of Mohammad Yunus

February 16, 2024

Bangladesh Prime Minister Hasina Sheikh celebrated the new year with news that one of her “enemies” was sentenced to six months in prison.

Professor Mohammad Yunus is 83 years old, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, recipient of the U.S. Congressional Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Yunus launched the first microcredit lending program in Bangladesh which evolved into the Grameen Bank. The “Banker to the Poor” made small loans to help poor people become entrepreneurs. As of 2020, Grameen Bank has roughly 9 million borrowers, 97 percent of which are women, with a near-perfect repayment rate.

Earlier in 2023, 190 global leaders, including 108 Nobel Laureates, signed a letter calling on the prime minister to stop harassing Professor Yunus. Help the signal break through the noise. Call members of Congress at: 202-224-3121 and encourage them to support a man who has lifted many out of poverty.

— Mary Minor, Snohomish

Volunteering offers a path toward seeing results

March 11, 2024

It’s very impressive that a high school junior is aware of the “numerous benefits of volunteering” (‘Looking for a late resolution? Consider serving as a volunteer,” by Matthew Leger, The Herald, Feb. 17)

My 30-plus years of volunteering with RESULTS (results.org) to make sure everyone has basic needs met by battling the scourges of poverty have proven those benefits to be true. I no longer had to stand by as more than 40,000 children were dying every day, instead using my voice with members of Congress to pass legislation that has cut that to around 14,000 each day. Still too many, but I am not done, and you can help, too. While it seems to some that all they can do is vote, RESULTS trains us to speak to and encourage our representatives to make a difference.

Hard to believe? Just last week I met with U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen, D-Wash., (after he got in touch with RESULTS) to get an update on global health for his upcoming trip to South Africa. He knows how to listen and ask questions and will be better prepared for his trip. Then he can encourage others in the House to fund initiatives like the End TB Now Act that save lives globally and protect us locally. So thanks to Matthew Leger for his reminder and to Rep. Larsen for his efforts to listen, learn, and take action. We can all do the same: volunteering creates a better world for all.

—Willie Dickerson, Snohomish

https://www.heraldnet.com/opinion/volunteering-offers-a-path-toward-seeing-results/
Supporting education as a nation, and in local community

April 21, 2024

Most of us would agree that educating children is important. We have an opportunity both globally and locally to demonstrate our commitment.

The Senate, with bipartisan support, has passed the reauthorization of the READ Act (Reading to Ensure Academic Development) ensuring equal access for children throughout the world.

The U.S. government has long been a leader in global education, and the READ Act has increased the effectiveness and impact of this work.

We urge the House of Representatives to take the next step and also pass the READ Act reauthorization. We thank Rep. Derek Kilmer for his ongoing support of this legislation.

Locally, we have the opportunity to ensure our children continue to have access to quality education in the CKSD school district. Please vote yes for the levy by Tuesday, April 23.

— Michael and Leslie Boyer, Bremerton

No online link
Children's poverty can be reduced

Food Insecurity

April 24, 2024

Looking at the beautiful colors and smiling children at the Easter Parade (April 3 Tribune), it is hard to imagine the poverty in our country and around the world that causes 45 million children to suffer from malnutrition.

Fortunately, Congress can do something about it. In our state alone, 273,000 children would benefit from the proposed bipartisan Tax Child Credit Expansion that has already passed the House by an overwhelming majority of both parties. Thanks to our Reps. Suzan DelBene and Rick Larsen for their work on this. Sens. Murray and Cantwell favor this bill, the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, but need our calls of support, 202-224-3121, to convince Senate leadership to bring it up and fellow senators to pass it. Global nutrition is another effort that can be increased with our voices saying it matters. Wouldn't it be great to see these parade type smiles on all children?

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish

Invest in education locally, and worldwide

May 16, 2024

It’s great that charter schools in our state are succeeding and meeting the academic needs of their students as well as our public schools (Kitsap Sun, April 23). Having choices for how our children are educated is such a blessing.

Worldwide, the situation is quite different. In many low-income nations, educational poverty (when kids don’t learn to read at their grade level by age 10) affects 86% of all children. Lack of educational attainment reduces their earning capacity for their entire lives and reduces the economic and political stability of their nations.

Fortunately, the U.S. has been investing in global education for many years. The pandemic reversed many of the improvements we and others achieved in global education, but now we can act to recover those losses. The READ Act Reauthorization Act, which focuses the dollars we invest in global education on the most effective strategies and requires reporting on the success of our investments, has already passed in the US Senate. Many thanks to Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell for voting for its passage.

Rep. Kilmer has co-sponsored the bill (H.R. 681), for which we are grateful. But it’s stuck in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. It’s time to bring it out of Committee for a vote on the floor of the House.

— Beth Wilson, Olalla

No online link
Grads can find meaning in life by volunteering

June 9, 2024

In the season of graduations, students get plenty of advice about the “real world” looming in their future (“5 thoughts for grads as the enter ‘the real world,” The Herald, May 18).

Finding meaningful work that pays the rent is a great idea, but sometimes hard to find. In the meantime, many opportunities exist for volunteering to make a difference. Sam Daley-Harris’ new book “Reclaiming Our Democracy” offers a path to do just that. Through his efforts to reach solutions for poverty (results.org) and climate change (citizensclimatelobby.org) he has created organizations that make a difference by working with our members of Congress. People of all ages join these groups, finding new friends, new understandings, and a path to make a better world for everyone. This is a great opportunity for anyone, including new graduates!

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish

https://www.heraldnet.com/opinion/grads-can-find-meaning-in-life-by-volunteering/
High schoolers grilling hopeful congressional candidates

June 13, 2204

Great to see candidates for Congress speaking up in front of high school students.

This is the best time to ask the hard questions, before they are elected, to inform our votes.

Hopefully there will be other chances to ask if they favor important things like increasing the child tax credit to once again cut poverty in half. And calling on support for global health, like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance that has saved millions of lives and protected us locally.

So many ways Congress can create a better country and world, protect the children, and give everyone a fair chance to excel.

These are issues candidates must take a public stand on and our questions help ensure democracy works.

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington

Call members of Congress and urge support of vaccine funding

June 21, 2024

With the covid vaccine, a new malaria vaccine, and a tuberculosis vaccine in development, we are seeing a renaissance in disease prevention. But we squander their lifesaving power if the vaccines never reach communities that need them most. In 2022, 4.9 million children under the age of 5 died due mostly to preventable health problems. As a pediatrician, I believe preventative care is fundamental to quality pediatric care. Eliminating vaccine-preventable childhood diseases is emblematic of this.

There is a proven strategy to fix this. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is an international partnership that provides essential supports for locally-led vaccine programs worldwide. Since its inception, Gavi has helped vaccinate over 1 billion children around the world, saving 17.3 million lives.

World leaders are coming together to reinvest in Gavi this year. To help set the tone for the global community, I urge Congress and the Biden administration to make a bold, multiyear pledge for Gavi of $1.4 billion over the next four years.

World leaders will meet in France on June 20 to discuss the next Gavi replenishment. We ask readers to call Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and urge them to cosponsor the bipartisan Senate resolution (S.Res. 684). Also, call their representative to urge him or her to cosponsor the bipartisan House resolution (H.Res 1286).

This will galvanize political will on the issue and put positive pressure on the administration to show up with the kind of pledge truly needed.

— Michael and Leslie Boyer, Bremerton

Wyoming media
We can stop tuberculosis, if we have the political will to do so

By Ann Erdmann

May 4, 2024

I just discovered “Call the Midwife,” now in its 13th season on PBS. For some reason I thought it was some sugary soap opera about cutely flustered new moms and young nurses with entertaining romantic complications. Was I ever wrong; and now, even with PBS Passport, I don’t have streaming access to the earlier seasons! Phooey.

I caught Season 13, Episode 4 just a couple of days ago. It originally aired on March 8, appropriately right before World TB Day on March 24. The story focuses on a young, middle-class family that has fled violence in sub-Saharan Africa looking for opportunity in Britain. Unfortunately, they find poverty instead.

Their children test positive for tuberculosis in a routine program at their school. The father has an active case that causes him to lose the menial job that was all he could find as an immigrant. [Spoiler alert] The baby — hence the midwives of the show’s title — and mother are vaccinated, the father dies before he can receive hospital care, and the two school-age children will need medication.

While medical care for the father and vaccinations for the mother and infant would be covered by Britain’s national health service, the prescriptions for the older children are subsidized, but not free. The new mother is left to provide, not just medication, but housing and wholesome food for her family, one of the most effective anti-TB treatments available.

“Call the Midwife” doesn't preach or give you a feel-good wrap up to the episode. The viewers are left to wonder for themselves, if they will, whether they might help families like this. And there are families like this all around the world.

The show doesn’t tell you, but the answer is, “Yes.” You can help families like this by ending tuberculosis.

It’s true; Congress needs to up its game with substantial FY 25 appropriations that will help defeat the leading killer among all communicable diseases in the world. USAID’s
bilateral TB programs and funding for organizations like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria are critical.

But before we start spending money, we need to ensure that those funds are spent effectively and accountably. Both houses of Congress have identical bipartisan bills designed to do just that. The End TB Now Act (ETNA) is sitting in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (S 288) and the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HR 1776).

Sitting. The heads of those committees haven't bothered to bring the bills up for votes. Are they afraid someone is going to vote in favor of tuberculosis? Or does TB lack the excitement that would catch voters' interest? Or does nobody in Congress want to be caught supporting something everybody can agree on?

Sen. Barrasso is a well-respected member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Surely he could help nudge ETNA along to success. Sen. Lummis and Rep. Hagerman could add their names yet as cosponsors for the bills and talk with their colleagues to help achieve an end to tuberculosis.

One of the young midwives on the PBS show realizes that it must have been TB that orphaned her as a child. Her story helps end this season's Episode 4 with the knowledge that modern medical science, applied in a committed, accountable program, can stop a deadly disease in its tracks.

All we lack is the political will to do so. Yours is the voice Congress needs to hear right now.

*Ann Erdmann is the group leader for RESULTS Cheyenne, a grassroots movement of people advocating for policies that will bring an end to poverty. Email:* annerdmann291@gmail.com.

https://www.wyomingnews.com/opinion/guest_column/erdmann-we-can-stop-tuberculosis-if-we-have-the-political-will-to-do-so/article_482eadd2-08e7-11ef-bfdd-2f4ac3d158d6.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share
National media
Feel-good policies

January 2024

Thanks for the inspirations stories of members making a difference by helping others [“Be the change,”, December 2023]. We can each do something – smile at others, take a moment to help in simple ways, talk to your members of Congress to encourage legislation that you believe will make a difference. Using our voices can make a difference.

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington

https://www.costcoconnection.com/january_2024/page2.html
Create a Bright Spot

Spring 2024

Lind Henry's piece about life brings up the question, “What am I creating?” (“Life is What You Create,” Fall 2023). There are many bright spots in our world, but of course it is generally the negative that gets the press (3rd Act is a joyful exception). Acts of kindness and working to make a difference, while living lightly, are helping me create a bright spot within. Speaking up to those who represent me in Congress (202-224-3121) about critical legislation like renewing the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the READ Act can create bright spots for millions in our country and around the world. Making this call can make a difference by cutting child poverty in half by passing the CTC and giving tens of millions the opportunity for an education in areas of the world experiencing poverty with the READ Act. Why not try taking action to create a bright spot, within you and without you?

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, WA

https://issuu.com/3rdactmagazine/docs/interior-spring-2024?fr=sMTMxNDY0NDEwMjM