

## **SUPPORT ENDING PREVENTABLE CHILD AND MATERNAL DEATHS**

Dear Colleagues,

As members of Congress concerned about improving the lives of women and children around the world, we urge you to join us in a letter to President Obama highlighting our support for the U.S.-led goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths globally within a generation and asking for continued support for strong investments in maternal and child health programs.

Working in partnership with developing countries to increase access to lifesaving vaccines, quality nutrition, skilled birth attendants, and other cost-effective interventions, the United States is a global leader in saving the lives of moms, newborns, and children. Through smart investments in development that have built the foundations for health, and through partner countries working to increase access to cost-effective health programs, even in the world's poorest places, significant strides have been made.

Since 1990, the number of children who die each year before age five of mainly preventable and treatable causes has been cut by over half. Additionally, the maternal mortality rate has been decreased by 40 percent. Yet over 6.3 million children still die each year before they reach their fifth birthday. Additionally, 289,000 women die from pregnancy-related causes each year.

To better address the goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, please join us in asking President Obama to maintain strong U.S. investments in maternal and child programs. A copy of the letter is below. If you need further information or would like to sign on, please contact Colin Swanson in Rep. Reichert's office at [Colin.Swanson@mail.house.gov](mailto:Colin.Swanson@mail.house.gov), Jenn Holcomb in Rep. McCollum's office at [Jenn.Holcomb@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jenn.Holcomb@mail.house.gov), Minty Abraham in Rep. Lee's office at [Minty.Abraham@mail.house.gov](mailto:Minty.Abraham@mail.house.gov) or Brandon Batch in Rep. McCaul's office at [Brandon.Batch@mail.house.gov](mailto:Brandon.Batch@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August XX, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As members of Congress committed to improving the lives of mothers and children around the world, we urge your administration to maintain the United States' strong commitment to ending preventable child deaths within a generation. This global development priority not only saves lives, but fosters stability and economic growth around the world. In light of your recent trip to Kenya and Ethiopia, we ask you to reaffirm your commitment to achieving this goal by continuing to support strong investments in maternal and child health programs.

Since 1990, the number of children who die each year before age five has been cut by over half, and the maternal mortality rate has declined by forty percent. As you know from your visit to Kenya and Ethiopia, this progress would not be possible without the commitment of the countries affected and the leadership of the United States. Ethiopia has dispatched over 35,000 health care workers to reach even the most remote communities and the under-five mortality rate has been halved in just 10 years. Starting in 2013, Kenya guaranteed maternal care for all citizens and in just two years has seen a forty-two percent drop in maternal mortality rates for women giving birth in a facility. By scaling up nutrition, particularly for pregnant women and young children, Kenya's 2014 Demographic Health Survey showed the country's first significant drop in child malnutrition and stunting in decades.

United States leadership, in support of developing countries and with partners like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has driven this global progress. However, over 6.3 million children still die each year before they reach their fifth birthday. Additionally, 289,000 women die from pregnancy-related causes each year.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken important steps to accelerate the end of child and maternal deaths. In the 2014 USAID Acting on the Call Report, the U.S. set bold goals of saving 15 million child lives and 600,000 women's lives by 2020, and realigned robust funding for greater impact. Responding to the recommendations of an independent review panel of business and development leaders, USAID has appointed a Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator to streamline decision-making, focus on impact, and ensure transparency and accountability. We urge USAID to continue these efforts to improve the effectiveness and impact of U.S. investments. We also encourage USAID to continue to leverage public-private partnerships to help achieve these goals.

Congress has historically demonstrated strong, bipartisan support for the United States' work with partner countries to improve maternal and child survival. We know that such interventions strengthen our national security as well as the security and economic stability of our allies. We encourage you to build upon this bipartisan tradition and maintain strong U.S. investments in maternal and child health programs. As Congress completes its work on the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations, and you begin to craft your next budget, we look forward to working with you to support these programs and accelerate efforts to end preventable child and maternal deaths.

Sincerely,

DAVE REICHERT  
Member of Congress

BETTY McCOLLUM  
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

MICHAEL McCAUL  
Member of Congress

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