

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support and protect the health of women and children in the developing world. As you begin work on the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2017, we respectfully request that you include robust funding for Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs.

Every day, approximately 800 women, almost entirely from developing countries, will die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. When a mother dies, her children are less likely to go to school, get immunized, and have access to good nutrition. More than 16,000 children under five years old will die each day of preventable and treatable conditions such as prematurity, pneumonia, and diarrhea—with malnutrition being the underlying cause in 45 percent of those deaths.

U.S. leadership in this field is critical and has resulted in real and measurable progress. In 1990, 12.6 million children under the age of five died from preventable causes. In 2014, that number fell to 5.9 million. In the 24 countries where U.S. involvement has been the greatest, maternal mortality has declined an average of five percent each year – more than double the global average. We recognize the need to balance limited resources in this difficult fiscal climate, but we strongly believe it is vital that the United States continue robust investment in Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs.

Our nation's Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs allow for the delivery of low-cost, life-saving services for newborns, children, and mothers throughout the developing world. These programs support critical initiatives that affect millions by providing access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care, training community health workers, procuring life-saving health commodities, and investing in the research and development of new lifesaving tools.

U.S. funding also supports Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which works to provide new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries, advance global polio eradication efforts, and implement nutrition-specific programs for women and children. These proven and effective programs can make a tremendous impact on a child's ability to succeed in the future.

Funding for maternal and child health and child nutrition is among the most cost-effective, life-saving investments the U.S. can make. We applaud the leadership you have

demonstrated over the years on this issue and urge you to continue strong support for these programs in the Fiscal Year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

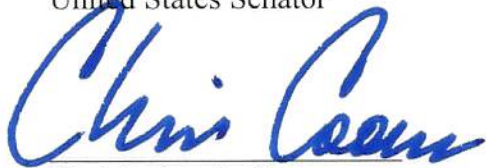
Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



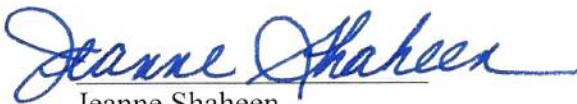
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Mazi K. Hirono
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



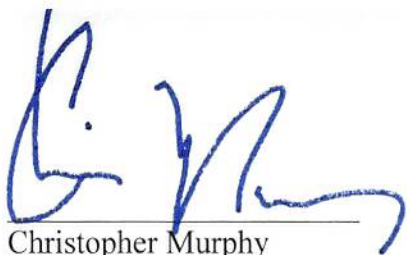
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



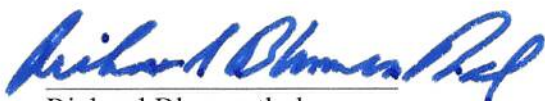
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



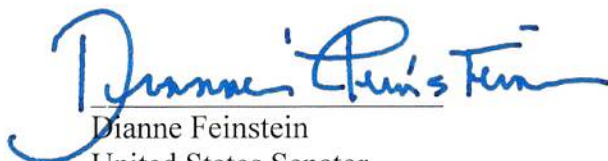
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator




Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator