Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

Thank you for your commitment to fiscal responsibility and ensuring our nation’s priorities are addressed. We share your interest in preserving effective, evidence-based, and sustainable poverty-focused foreign assistance that saves lives and creates economic stability in developing countries. We also appreciate the leadership you have taken to ensure substantial support for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nutrition efforts globally. As you begin to consider the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2019, we strongly urge you to allocate robust funding for MCH – including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and Nutrition in Global Health.

These vital investments in the maternal and child survival programs build the foundation for the U.S. goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths globally within a generation. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has developed benchmark targets for this goal and an evidence-based roadmap to save an additional 15 million child lives and 600,000 women’s lives by the year 2020. There is consensus among scientists and global health experts that this is possible. But achieving this bold goal requires continued Congressional commitment and support for critical maternal and child survival and nutrition programs.

By continuing strong U.S. leadership, and in close collaboration with partner countries, we are seeing real and measurable progress. The annual number of under-five deaths has drastically fallen from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.6 million in 2016. Additionally, in the 25 countries where U.S. involvement has been the greatest, maternal mortality has declined an average of 5 percent each year, faster than the global average. While great strides have been made to increase maternal, newborn and child health, the world is not yet on track to meet the goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths within a generation globally.

Each day, more than 800 women, almost entirely from developing countries, die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Additionally, over 15,000 children, who are under the age of five, die of mainly preventable and/or treatable conditions such as prematurity, pneumonia and diarrhea — with malnutrition being the underlying cause in 45 percent of those deaths. Newborn deaths are also a growing proportion of child mortality, with one million children dying on the day they are born. Moreover, when a woman dies, her children are less likely to go to school, get immunized, and have access to good nutrition, and they are up to 10 times more likely to die in childhood than children whose mothers are alive.
Our nation’s MCH and Nutrition programs allow for the delivery of low cost, life-saving services for newborns, children, and women throughout developing countries. These programs provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care; training for frontline health workers; clean water, sanitation, and hygiene; life-saving health commodities; and research and development of new lifesaving tools.

These accounts also support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which provides new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries, global polio eradication and measles elimination efforts, and nutrition-specific programs for women and children, especially in the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child’s second birthday. These programs can make a tremendous impact on children’s ability to learn and later secure employment and provide for their families as adults. Without quality nutrition and early intervention health services, a child’s physical and cognitive development is at risk of being stunted. Almost a quarter of the world’s children never reach their full learning, social, and economic potential because of this.

Therefore, funding for maternal and child health globally is among the most cost-effective, life-saving investments the U.S. can make to ensure children survive and thrive. We applaud your leadership and urge you to continue strong support for these programs. It is vital to make robust investments while maintaining other critical humanitarian and development programs that support the well-being of women, newborns, and children to reach our shared goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths globally. We look forward to working with you to help the United States maintain its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,

Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Dennis Ross  
Member of Congress

Ami Bera  
Member of Congress

Michael McCaul  
Member of Congress
Kathy Cast
Member of Congress

Gerald F. Connelly
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress
Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

Lamar Smith
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Ryan A. Costello
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Elliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress

Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Esty  
Member of Congress

Gene Green  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

John Sarbanes  
Member of Congress
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

Don Beyer  
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

Jared Polis  
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Haskett  
Member of Congress

Tom MacArthur  
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Salud O. Carbajal  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Jim Himes  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress
Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Anna Marie Kuster  
Member of Congress

David Scott  
Member of Congress

Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress

C.K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

Colleen Hanabusa  
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

Lynn Jenkins  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress
Al Green
Member of Congress

Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Roger Marshall M.D.
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

John J. Paso
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Steve Pearce
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna M.C.
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Susan W. Brooks
Member of Congress