

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Vice Chairwoman Collins, Chairman Coons, and Ranking Member Graham,

As you determine priorities for the fiscal year (FY) 2024 State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that you provide **robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) account, including Gavi, and the Nutrition account, both within Global Health Programs at USAID.** Adequate funding for the MCH and Nutrition accounts is critical to preserving effective, evidence-based, poverty-focused assistance that saves lives and helps strengthen economies in developing countries.

This Committee has a long-standing record of supporting critical, life-saving investments in global child and maternal health and nutrition. In 2021, USAID helped 91 million women and children access essential health services, reaching 31 million children and 11 million pregnant women with lifesaving nutrition interventions.

While reductions in global mortality rates for women and children are two of the biggest success stories in international development, progress has slowed over the past 12 years. There remain significant gaps that additional investments can help close. In 2021, 5 million children under age five died from mainly preventable and treatable diseases, with malnutrition as the underlying cause of roughly half of these deaths.¹ Additionally, 300,000 women die annually of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.²

The MCH account supports delivery of cost-effective, proven services in countries where the burden of preventable deaths is often the highest. USAID's lifesaving investments provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care, training for frontline health workers, safe water, sanitation and hygiene in healthcare facilities, health commodities and nutrition services like breastfeeding support. A critical portion of the MCH account supports

¹ UNICEF, Child Malnutrition, May 2022, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>.

² UNICEF, Under-five mortality, January 2023, accessed February 27, 2022, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/>.

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Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a public-private partnership that has helped to immunize a whole generation—more than 981 million children—and prevented more than 16 million deaths, helping to halve child mortality in lower-income countries since 2000. In the wake of pandemic disruptions of routine immunization programs, UNICEF reports that for the first time in decades, the number of children receiving zero doses of life-saving vaccinations is on the rise. Resources for Gavi bolster efforts to continue necessary immunization and deliver vaccines to lower income countries, while USAID’s technical support is essential to facilitate these efforts and enable equitable access to vaccines.

The Nutrition account supports nutrition programs for women and children, focusing on the first 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child’s second birthday. It is crucial to reach children and their caregivers early in life with interventions like breastfeeding support and vitamin A supplementation to prevent malnutrition. When children are malnourished, early detection and access to therapeutic foods can save lives. Severely malnourished children are much more likely to have weakened immune systems and are at risk of permanent physical and mental stunting, which prevents them from reaching their full educational, social and earning potential.

Malnutrition costs the world \$3.5 trillion in lost productivity and healthcare costs each year.³ The current global food crisis, fueled by conflict, climate shocks and the threat of a global recession, continues to threaten the lives of women and children globally. Full funding of the nutrition account is critical for saving lives and reaching USAID’s goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths.

To improve global maternal and child health and nutrition, we respectfully urge you to **provide robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) account, including Gavi, and the Nutrition account in GHP for FY 2024.**

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States maintains its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Roger Marshall M.D.
United States Senator


³ Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, Cost of Malnutrition, July 2016, <https://www.glopan.org/cost-of-malnutrition/>.

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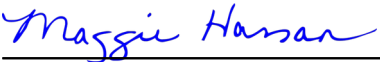
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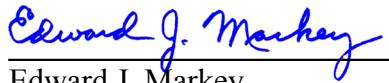
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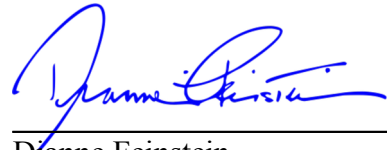
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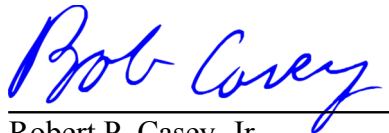
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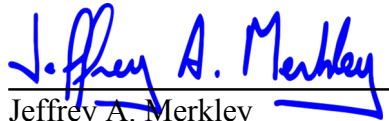
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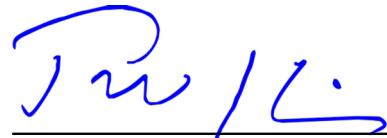
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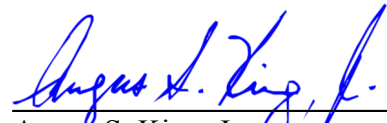
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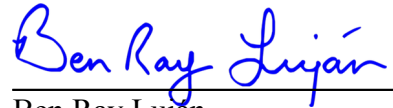
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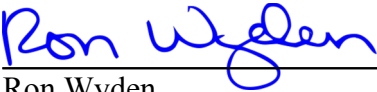
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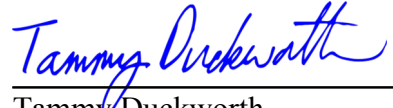
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