

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
1016 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Lowey and Ranking Member Rogers:

As you begin consideration of the Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for fiscal year (FY) 2020, we strongly urge you to allocate robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) account—including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance—and the Nutrition account. This funding is critical to preserving effective, evidence-based, poverty-focused assistance that saves lives and helps strengthen economies in developing countries.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) MCH and Nutrition programs form the backbone of the U.S. commitment to help end preventable child and maternal deaths globally. While reductions in global mortality rates for mothers and children are two of the biggest success stories in international development, there remain significant gaps that additional investments and continued U.S. leadership can help close.

For example, a growing proportion of under-five deaths occur in the first 28 days after birth, with approximately 7,000 newborns dying each day. And while deaths from illnesses such as malaria, and HIV have dropped significantly, progress in preventing deaths from pneumonia and diarrhea have been much slower, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. While there are vaccines to prevent the deadliest cases, pneumonia and diarrheal diseases are still leading killers for children under five. Finally, recent estimates suggest that more than 300,000 women continue to die annually of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, almost all in low-resource settings.

To continue progress and address these persistent challenges, MCH programs support the delivery of low-cost, proven, life-saving services in 25 priority countries where the burden of preventable deaths is the highest. USAID's generous investments help 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 innovative tools. A critical portion of the MCH account supports Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which provides new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries.

The Nutrition account supports nutrition-specific programs for women and children, focusing on the first 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. These programs can make a tremendous impact on a child's ability to learn and, later on in life, secure employment and provide for their families as healthy adults. Absent 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 earning, social, and economic potential because of this.

Again, we urge you to allocate robust funding for MCH and Nutrition programs in FY20, along with continued support for other programs that contribute to the health and well-being of families in developing countries. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States maintains its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



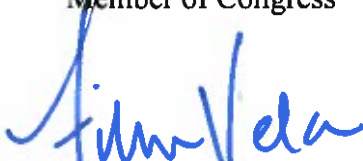
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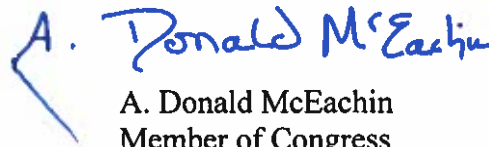
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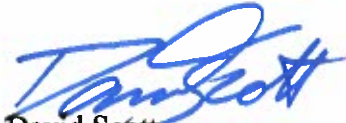
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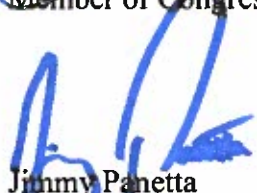
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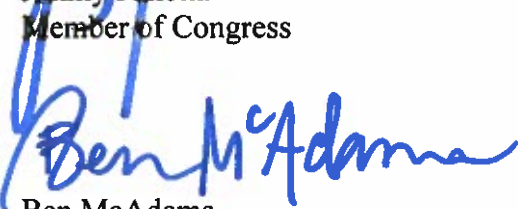
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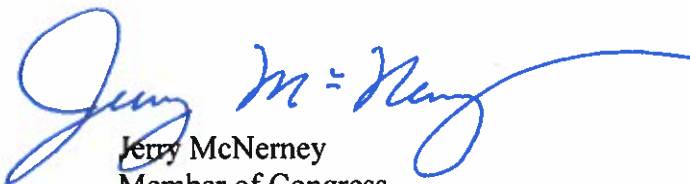
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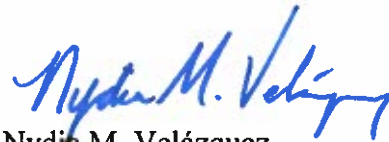
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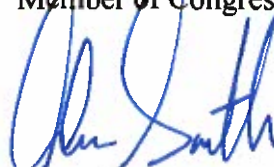
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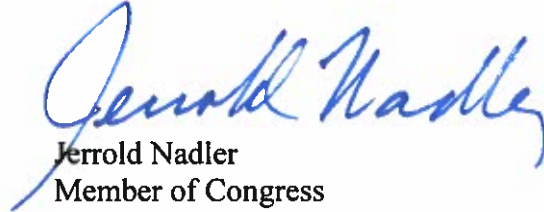
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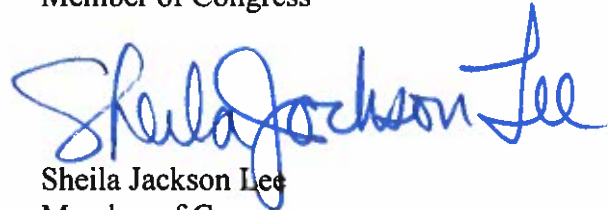
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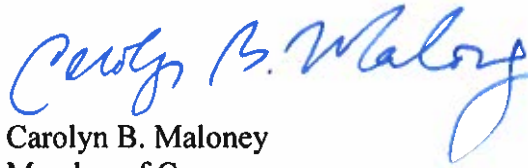
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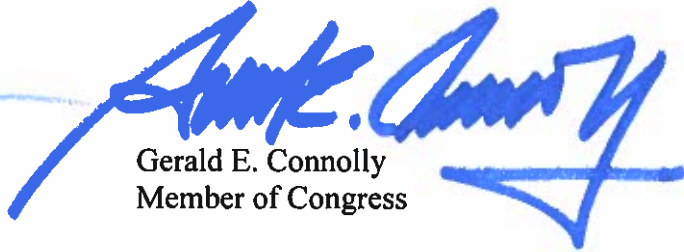
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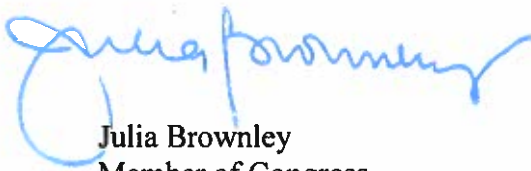
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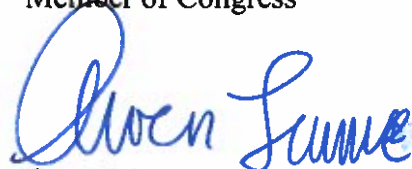
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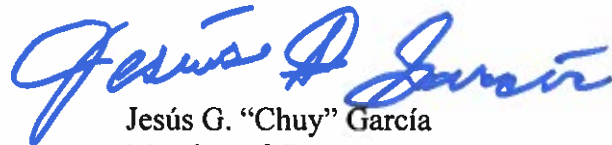
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