

Reaching Moms and Kids Everywhere

In every corner of the world, parents have the same dream for their kids – to have the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. Much too often that dream is cut short. Each year 6.3 million children still die of mainly preventable and treatable causes before they reach their fifth birthday and close to 300,000 women die due to complications with pregnancies. But the latest evidence shows that we can end unnecessary deaths of children and moms globally by 2035. What we do in the coming months, though, will decide if we meet that goal. Forthcoming legislation now proposes a smarter, more effective approach to getting us there.

Background: Legislation to Help Finish the Job

The United States has long been a leader helping moms and babies survive and thrive, partnering with developing countries to support things like vaccines and quality nutrition. However, a high-level review by a panel of business and development leaders concluded that we will not meet our goals without first addressing underlying bureaucratic challenges.¹

New, bipartisan legislation will hold USAID accountable for a smarter, more effective approach to ending preventable maternal and child deaths. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), our main global development agency, is already implementing some of the panel’s proposed reforms. But this alone will not be enough. Requiring a centralized and coherent strategy, the bill will maximize our investments, with returns measured in lives saved and healthy, prosperous communities.

Demonstrate Strong Constituent Support with Letters and Media

With all that is at stake, there’s no better time to remind our communities and decision makers that every mother everywhere wants to see her children grow up healthy, go to school, and build a bright future. Work with your community to write letters to your representative and senators to demonstrate constituent support for action or use the media to tell your member of Congress that it is time that every child has the chance to thrive. Below is a guide for writing to representatives or senators, and/or writing a letter to the editor (LTE) or op-ed.

1. Tell your members of Congress and/or LTE readers:
 - That you believe that now is the time to create a healthy, bright future for millions of mothers and children worldwide.

¹ Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel Report on USAID, June 2014
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/blue-ribbon-advisoy-panel.pdf>

- Emphasize that **this isn't just a pipe dream**. The evidence shows that the end of preventable maternal and child deaths is possible.
 - Explain that forthcoming legislation will help **turn this lofty goal into a viable plan, and ask for leadership from your member of Congress by name**.
2. When writing a LTE, **reference a story in the paper** on children, families, or a health issue, **ideally from the front page or the editorial section**. You can “hook” your letter to local, national, or international news depending on what is in the paper or on people’s minds. Check submission requirements, and keep letters short (100-200 words).
 3. Use the EPIC format like the sample below to write to Congress or the media. Increase your impact by personalizing your letter with a story of your own (or one you’ve read that has had a particular impact on you).

<u>E</u>ngage	Most of us have children in our lives—siblings, nieces, grandchildren, or our own kids. They all deserve the healthcare and nutrition that will help them thrive in life.
<u>P</u>roblem	But childhood can be fragile. Worldwide, 6.3 million children die each year before they reach their fifth birthday, and most of these deaths are preventable.
<u>I</u>nform about the solution	This spring, Congress will introduce bipartisan legislation that will put us on a track to ending the senseless deaths of young children and mothers once and for all. The legislation will call for three key reforms: 1) a coordinated strategy for ending preventable maternal and child deaths, 2) clear targets for reaching the poorest people, 3) scaling up of the most effective, evidence-based interventions.
<u>C</u>all to action!	No matter where they are born, children deserve to thrive. When the bill is introduced, Senator(s) xxxx and Representative xxxx should cosponsor this critical legislation.

Once You Have Written or Have Been Published

Letters to Congress: Collect the letters and drop them by or mail them to a local office, take them into a local meeting with your member of Congress, or bring them to the RESULTS International Conference to deliver them in person. You can also scan and email your letters to the foreign policy aid in the DC office. Accompany your letters with a specific request for the member of Congress to cosponsor the forthcoming maternal/child health legislation.

Letter to the Editor: If your LTE gets published, amplify its impact by sending it to your members of Congress via their foreign policy aide, their Facebook page, Twitter, or their webpage. Tell them why this issue matters to you, and ask them to cosponsor the bill.

Need More Background Information?

Use this [fact sheet](#), watch our [webinar](#), or read about [USAID's child survival work](#) online.