

## Let's Pass the Reach Act! Ask Your Senators and Representatives to Cosponsor S.1730/H.R. 4022

The bicameral, bipartisan Reach Every Mother and Child Act of 2017 (S.1730 or H.R. 4022) was reintroduced by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Chris Coons (D-DE) and Representatives Dave Reichert (R-WA), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Barbara Lee (D-CA), and Dan Donovan (R-NY). Building on the success of such global health initiatives as PEPFAR and the President's Malaria Initiative, **the 'Reach Act' legislation would enact key reforms that increase the effectiveness and impact of the U.S. government's efforts to end preventable child and maternal deaths globally.**

At the end of the last Congress (in December 2016), this incredibly bipartisan legislation had over half of the House of Representatives and over a third of the Senate as cosponsors – garnering more Congressional support than *any* previous global health bill. **This session, RESULTS is calling on members of Congress to pass the Reach Act into law.**

### The U.S. Legacy on Child Survival

With U.S. leadership, the world has cut under-five child deaths and maternal deaths by more than half since 1990. By partnering with developing country governments to deliver quality health services, roll out new vaccines, and improve nutrition for moms and kids, efforts supported by the U.S. taxpayer have helped countries save hundreds of millions of lives. In 2016, USAID helped 82 million women and children access essential, often life-saving, health services. As a leader in maternal and child health, the U.S. also spearheaded diplomatic efforts with the global community to adopt the goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths.

While the drastic decline in both child and maternal deaths is one of the greatest success stories in international development, U.S. engagement remains critical.

- Each year 5.6 million children under the age of five still die of mainly preventable and treatable causes – with diarrhea, pneumonia, and malnutrition being some of the biggest killers.
- While overall child deaths have been decreasing, newborn deaths have not. UNICEF now reports that one million newborns die on the day they are born. 2.6 million newborns do not survive their first month of life.
- Additionally, over 300,000 women die due to complications with pregnancy and childbirth each year. The poorer the household, the greater the risk of maternal death, with 99 percent of the maternal deaths occurring in the developing world.

With cost-effective, evidence-based interventions, and the know-how to drive down the leading killers of moms and kids, this should not be the case.

## USAID Reforms to Save More Lives

To better evaluate efforts to reach the goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, in 2014 USAID's maternal and child health programs underwent an exhaustive review by a high-level panel of business and development leaders (ACES Blue Ribbon Panel). The panel concluded that in order to achieve the goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, USAID must first address underlying bureaucratic challenges at the agency.<sup>1</sup>

USAID is already implementing some of the panel's proposed reforms, including creating clear benchmarks for success, appointing a Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator, and realigning \$2.9 billion in existing grants to improve health outcomes. But this alone will not be enough. Legislation is needed to ensure progress in implementing the reform efforts is not rolled-back and that USAID is held accountable for the stewardship of tax-payer dollars.

### More on the Reach Act

The Reach Act is a bold policy initiative supported by more than 50 diverse non-governmental organizations – including advocacy groups, implementers, and faith-based organizations. The Reach Act will hold USAID accountable for a smarter, more effective approach to ending preventable child and maternal deaths. Requiring a centralized and coherent strategy, the bill will improve coordination and maximize our investments, with returns measured in lives saved and healthy, prosperous communities. The Reach Act enshrines into law:

- An ambitious, **coordinated U.S. Government strategy** with **clear, measurable goals** and increased **accountability and transparency**.
- A focus on the **poorest and most vulnerable populations** that recognizes the unique needs within different countries and communities.
- The scale up the most **effective, evidence-based interventions** with a focus on country ownership and alignment with existing maternal, newborn, and child survival plans.
- A Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator responsible for **oversight** of resources directly linked to reducing maternal and child mortality and the budget, staffing, and planning necessary to ensure **coordination and effectiveness** of the programs.
- Measures for USAID to use **new, innovative funding** sources to complement U.S. investments.

With a strategy that puts kids and mothers first, we have the chance to make sure every child, regardless of where she's born, has a healthy start to life. But, Congress needs to act.

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

## Demonstrate Strong Constituent Support with Letters

Write letters to your representative and senators to demonstrate constituent support for action and gather your community to help!

1. Tell your members of Congress:
  - That you believe that now is the time to create a healthy, bright future for millions of mothers and children worldwide.
  - 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 the Reach Act (S.1730 /H.R. 4022) will help **turn this ambitious goal into a viable plan, and ask for your Member of Congress to co-sponsor this bill**.
2. 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).

<b><u>E</u>ngage</b>	In too many places in the world, the most dangerous day in a child's life is the day they are born. For a girl child, too often the next most dangerous day is when she gives birth herself.
<b><u>P</u>roblem</b>	One million children annually don't survive their first day of life. Over two million don't survive the first month. Over 300,000 women die each year from complications with pregnancy and child birth. The travesty is the vast majority of these deaths happen in poor countries and most are completely preventable.
<b><u>I</u>ncome about the solution</b>	The Reach Every Mother and Child Act (S.1730 / H.R. 4022) is the most bipartisan global health bill on record. The Reach Act aims to improve USAID's impact and effectiveness in saving the lives of the most vulnerable moms and kids. It was reintroduced this Congress by Senators Collins and Coons and Representatives Reichert, McCollum, Lee, and Donovan. The legislation calls for a coordinated strategy for ending preventable child and maternal deaths and sets clear targets for reaching the poorest people with effective, evidence-based interventions.
<b><u>C</u>all to action!</b>	No matter where they are born, women and children deserve the opportunity to survive and thrive. Senator(s)/ Representative XXXX, will you co-sponsor this critical legislation?  <i>**If they are a cosponsor already** Senator(s)/ Representative XXXX, will you speak to leadership about moving the bill this year?</i>

Need More Background Information? Use this [fact sheet](#) or find more resources [here](#).