

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2018

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

We share your commitment to preserving effective, evidence-based, and sustainable foreign assistance that saves lives and creates economic stability and opportunity in developing countries. We appreciate your leadership in providing substantial support for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and nutrition efforts globally, including funding for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

As you begin to consider the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2019, we urge you to maintain robust funding for MCH, including Gavi, and for Nutrition in Global Health.

These life-saving investments in MCH and Nutrition 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 lives of children and 600,000 women's lives by the year 2020. These bold goals are achievable with continued congressional support for child survival and nutrition programs.

Through close collaboration with partner countries and public-private partnerships like Gavi, we are seeing the lives of mothers and children saved as a result of U.S. investments. The annual number of deaths among children under five has fallen sharply from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.6 million in 2016. According to USAID, in 24 of the U.S.-identified priority countries, chosen based on the severity of maternal and child deaths, maternal mortality has declined by an average of five percent each year, faster than the global average.

While great strides have been made to increase maternal, newborn, and child health, more work remains to be done. Each day, more than 800 women, almost entirely from developing countries, die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. More than 15,000 children under the age of five die of mainly preventable or treatable conditions such as prematurity, pneumonia, and diarrhea. Malnutrition is 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 mother dies, her children are less likely to go to school, get immunized, or have access to good nutrition. They are also up to 10 times more likely to die in childhood than children with living mothers.

Investments in 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, cost-effective life-saving tools.

These accounts also support global polio eradication and measles elimination efforts along with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which provides new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries. Additionally, the nutrition-specific accounts support critical programs for women and children, especially for the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. These programs can have a tremendous impact on children's ability to learn and later secure employment and provide for their families as adults.

Funding for maternal and child health and child nutrition is among the most cost-effective, life-saving investments the U.S. can make. We applaud the leadership you have demonstrated on this issue and urge you to continue strong support for these programs in the Fiscal Year 2019 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. We look forward to working with you to help the United States maintain its leadership in this global effort.

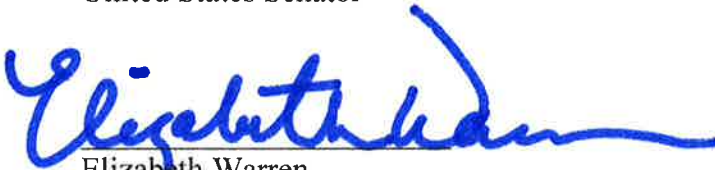
Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



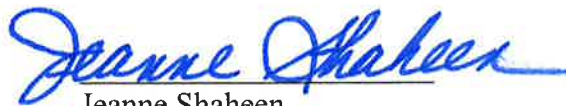
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



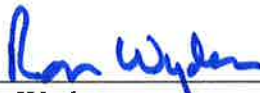
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



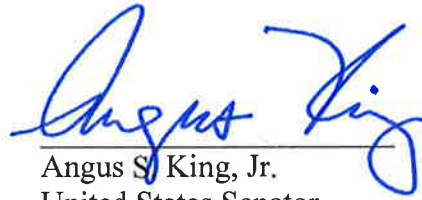
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
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Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



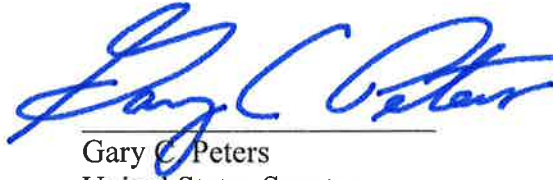
Johnny Isakson
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Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



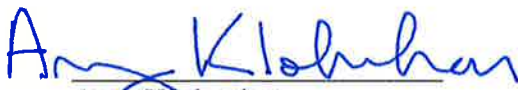
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



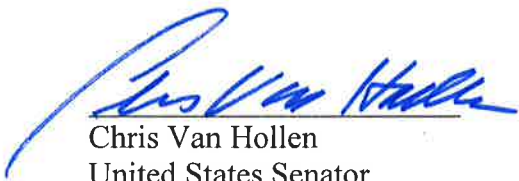
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



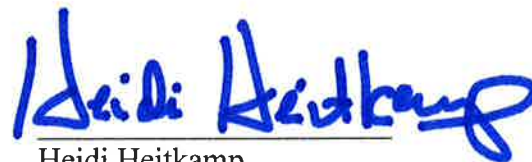
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



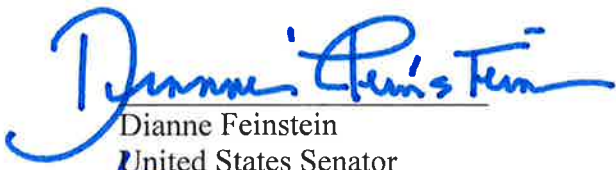
Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

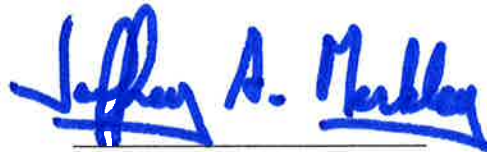


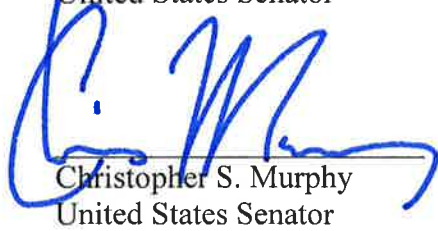
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
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Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
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Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

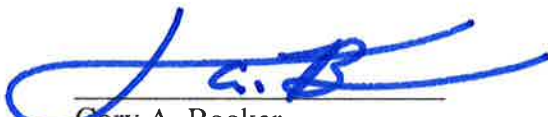

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

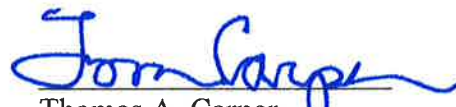

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator


Tammy Duckworth
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Thomas A. Carper
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