

Use the media to tell Congress: Let's support every mother and child with the Reach Act

As kindergarteners are heading into classrooms for the first time, a new bill in Washington DC is set to make sure every child has that same chance one day. Today over six million children still die every year before they reach their fifth birthday – but this need not be the case, and now Congress can do something about it.

The latest evidence shows that the world can end the unnecessary deaths of mothers and children by 2035. The Reach Every Mother and Child Act of 2015 will help make this goal a reality. Write a letter to the editor asking your members of Congress to cosponsor the Reach Act and play their part in ensuring every child has the chance to thrive.

Legislation to help end needless deaths for good

As Congress returns to Washington and kids return to school, it's time for us 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.

The United States has long been a leader in helping moms and babies survive and thrive and partnering with developing countries to support things like vaccines and quality nutrition. However, last year an external review panel found that USAID, our country's main international development agency, was not on track to meet its ambitious goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths by 2035.

USAID is already implementing some of the panel's proposed reforms. But this alone will not be enough. The new, bipartisan Reach Act (S. 1911) will hold USAID accountable for a smarter, more effective approach to ending preventable maternal and child deaths. The bill will maximize our investments, with returns measured in lives saved and healthy, prosperous communities.

Write a letter to the editor to tell Congress you support the Reach Act. Here's how:

1. Reference a **recent article in the paper**. Whether it's a "back to school" story or one about a local health issue, try to appeal to experiences that relate to your community.
2. Tell readers **about the chance to secure** a healthy, bright future for every child, regardless of where she's born.
3. Emphasize that **this isn't just a pipe dream**. The evidence shows that the end of preventable maternal and child deaths is possible.
4. Explain that the Reach Act will help **turn this lofty goal into a viable plan**.
5. **Ask your members of Congress** (by name!) to cosponsor the Reach Act.

Getting your name in print

Use the “EPIC” format, like the sample below. Remember to keep it short (100-200 words), and be sure to include a local “hook” (preferably a story already printed in the paper). Between kids going back to school, Congress heading back to Washington, and the new [global goals](#) (SDGs) that are the focus of world leaders, September is packed with opportunities for media.

<u>E</u>ngage	The photo of the 3-year-old Syrian boy washing up on the beach shocked the world. It reminded me that in every corner of the world, parents have the same dream for their kids – to see them grow up healthy and to thrive.
<u>P</u>roblem	On the positive side UNICEF just reported that in the last 30 years, we have cut child deaths around the world in half. But regretfully, today alone, 16,000 children will still die from treatable causes like diarrhea and pneumonia.
<u>I</u>nforn about the solution	Now for the first time ever, scientists agree it’s possible to stop these avoidable deaths. The Reach Every Mother and Child Act, S. 1911, will help make this a reality.
<u>C</u>all to action!	Now that they are back in Washington, I hope Senators Burr and Tillis and other members of Congress will cosponsor the Reach Act. Together we can make sure that every child in the world has the chance at a bright, healthy future.

Get started now. Once you’re finished writing, have someone read it over, then submit it according to the requirements of your paper. Not every letter gets published, but the more you send, the more likely you are to meet with success. Find more tips in our [activist toolkit](#).

Take your media to the next level

Already get a letter to the editor published? Be sure to check out our child health media toolkit (http://results.org/issues/maternal_and_child_health_media_toolkit) for tips on local angles, getting op-eds published, and working with your local editor.

Once you’re published

If your letter gets published, amplify its impact by sending a copy to your members of Congress, reminding them why this issue matters, and asking them to take action. If you’re on social media, share it there as well, mentioning your member of Congress and the newspaper that published you. Then be sure to share your letter with your fellow advocates and RESULTS staff.

Need more background information?

Visit our Maternal and Child resource page:

http://www.results.org/issues/global_poverty_campaigns/maternal_and_child_health/