United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

Thank you for your ongoing support of funding for polio eradication through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Global Immunization Program. We respectfully request that you continue your leadership by supporting the President's Fiscal Year 2016 budget request for the polio eradication efforts of the CDC in the FY 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

This funding will enable the CDC to continue its global technical leadership in support of high-quality immunization campaigns and polio surveillance and develop in-country capacity to interrupt polio transmission globally. The polio eradication initiative is one of the largest, most successful, public-private health initiatives ever undertaken. More than two and a half billion children have been immunized, 10 million have been spared disability, and over 250,000 deaths have been averted. In addition, eradication of polio would achieve an estimated savings of between $40-50 billion over the next 25 years.

Eradication efforts have led to more than a 99 percent decrease in cases since the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988 but more work is needed. Only three countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria – have never stopped the transmission of polio. India, long considered the global epicenter of the disease, has been declared polio free and in March 2014 the entire Southeast Asia region was certified polio free by the World Health Organization.

The best practices used to reach children for polio immunization are being applied to address other health and development challenges we face as a global community. Perhaps the most recent compelling example of this can be found in Nigeria, where lessons and infrastructure from polio eradication were immediately applied to effectively stop the Ebola outbreak. Nigeria's success in conquering Ebola is an example of the widespread effects of polio eradication in action – and of the immediate return on our collective investment.

The continued leadership of the United States is essential to ensure we capitalize on the historic opportunity to free the world from polio once and for all. In order to continue this tremendous progress toward global polio eradication, we respectfully request your continued support for the polio eradication activities of the CDC in fiscal year 2016.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Johnny Isakson
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator