

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 30, 2015

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Department of State,  
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Department of State,  
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support and protect the health of women and children in the developing world. As you begin work on the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2016, we respectfully request that you include robust funding for Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs.

U.S. leadership and funding to improve the survival and health of mothers and children is critical to achieving the global goal of ending preventable maternal and child deaths by the year 2035. There is broad consensus among global health experts, doctors, and scientists that this is an attainable goal. We recognize the need to balance limited resources in this difficult fiscal climate, but we strongly believe it is vital that the United States continue robust investment in Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs.

As a result of U.S. leadership and partnership with developing countries, real and measurable progress has been made. The annual number of under-five deaths fell from 12.6 million in 1990 to 6.3 million in 2013. Additionally, in the 24 countries where U.S. involvement has been the greatest, maternal mortality has declined an average of five percent each year, faster than the global average.

While important strides have been made to increase maternal, newborn and child health, much work needs to be done. Every day, approximately 800 women, almost entirely from developing countries, will die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In addition, over 17,000 children under five years old will die each day of preventable and treatable conditions such as prematurity, pneumonia and diarrhea—with malnutrition being the underlying cause in 45 percent of those deaths.

Our nation's Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs allow for the delivery of low-cost, life-saving services for newborns, children, and mothers throughout the developing world. These programs support critical initiatives that impact millions by providing access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care, training community health workers, procuring life-saving health commodities, and investing in the research and development of new lifesaving tools.

U.S. funding also supports the Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which works to provide new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries, support global polio eradication efforts, and implement nutrition-specific programs for women and children. These proven and effective programs can make a tremendous impact on a child's ability to succeed in the future.

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 over the years on this issue and urge you to continue strong support for these programs in the Fiscal Year 2016 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator



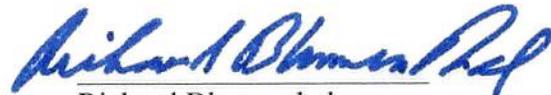
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United States Senator



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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



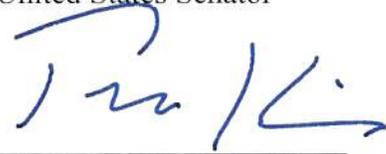
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



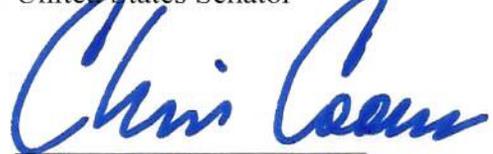
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



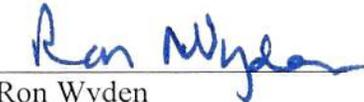
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United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



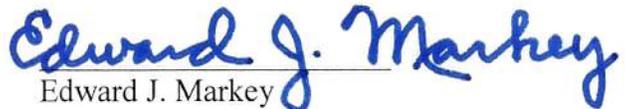
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
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Martin Heinrich  
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