

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, and Chairwoman Granger,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to balance limited resources while addressing our nation's highest priorities in this challenging fiscal climate. We share your interest in preserving effective poverty-focused foreign aid that saves lives and creates economic stability in developing countries and appreciate all of your efforts in the House last year to continue to provide substantial support for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) efforts. As you begin to craft the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2016, **we strongly urge you to allocate robust funding for MCH – including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and Nutrition in Global Health.**

These investments in MCH and nutrition will build the foundation for the U.S. goal of *ending preventable maternal and child deaths within a generation*. The June 2014 launch of USAID's Acting on the Call: Ending Preventable Maternal and Child Deaths report, provided benchmark targets for that goal and an evidence-based roadmap to saving an additional 15 million child lives and 600,000 women's lives by the year 2020. There is consensus among scientists and global health experts that this is possible. But achieving this goal requires strong support for these critical child survival and nutrition programs.

U.S. leadership and funding to improve the survival and health of mothers and children has delivered real and measurable progress. 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 5 percent each year, faster than the global average.

While great 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.

Additionally, each day, over 17,000 children under five years old will die of preventable and treatable conditions such as prematurity, pneumonia and diarrhea— with malnutrition being the

underlying cause in 45 percent of those deaths. Newborn deaths are 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, and have access to good nutrition, and they are up to 10 times more likely to die in childhood than children with mothers.

Our nation's MCH and Nutrition programs allow for the delivery of low cost, life-saving services for newborns, children, and mothers throughout the developing world. These programs provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care, training for community health workers, life-saving health commodities, and research and development of new lifesaving tools.

These accounts also support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to provide new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries, the global polio eradication efforts, and nutrition-specific programs for women and children, especially in the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. These proven and effective programs can make a tremendous impact on children's ability to learn, get a job, and provide for their families in the future.

Funding for maternal and child health is among the most cost-effective, life-saving investments the U.S. can make. We applaud the leadership you have demonstrated and urge you to continue strong support for these programs. It is vital to make robust investments while maintaining other critical humanitarian and development programs that support the well-being of women, newborns and children to enable the United States to reach its goal of ending preventable maternal and child deaths. We look forward to working with you to help the United States maintain its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,



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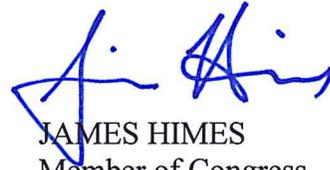
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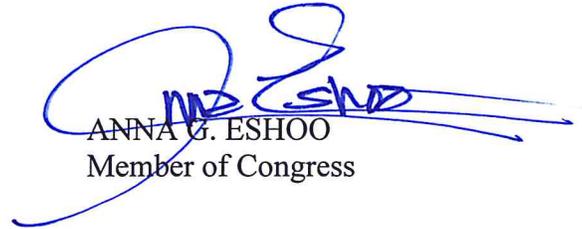
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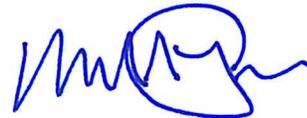
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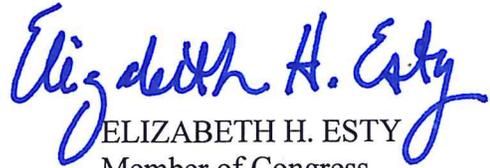
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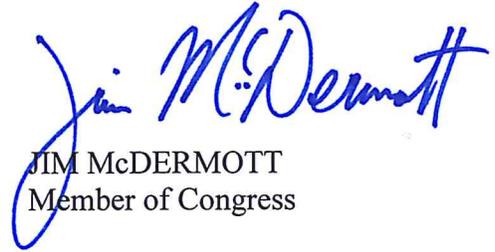
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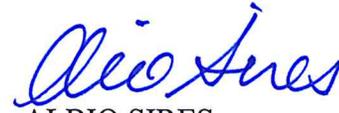

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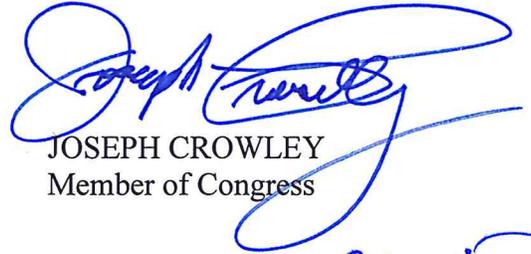

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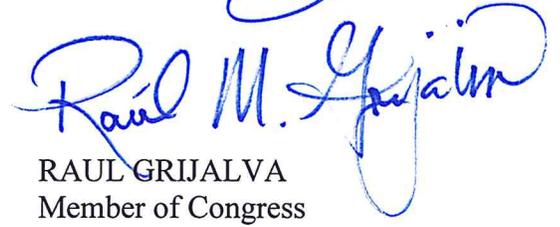
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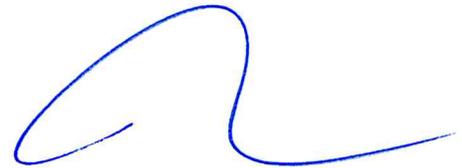
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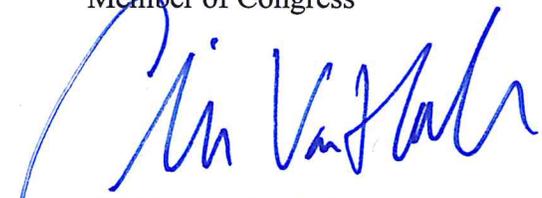
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