February 13, 2023

Dear Members of the 118th Congress:

As your constituents, we warmly welcome you to the new congressional session and extend our best wishes for the years ahead. As you embrace opportunities to address national challenges during this session, we urge you to consider the role Congress can play in building the infant nutrition security infrastructure this nation sorely needs. In particular, breastfeeding gives infants and mothers important and long-lasting health protections that contribute to significant public health cost savings.¹

Breastfeeding has a profound impact on population health outcomes. The evidence for the value of human milk on overall health for infants, children, and mothers is scientific, robust, and continually reaffirmed by new research. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be exclusively breastfed for six months with continued breastfeeding while introducing complementary foods for two years or as long as mutually desired by the mother and child.²Breastfed infants are at lower risk of certain infections and sudden unexplained infant death. A recent CDC study of over 3 million U.S. births found that ever breastfeeding is associated with a 26% reduction in the odds of post-perinatal (between 7-364 days) infant death.³Breastfed children have decreased risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who breastfeed reduce their risk of specific chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers.⁴

The majority of pregnant people and new mothers want to breastfeed.⁵Yet, numerous barriers in healthcare, community, and employment settings impede breastfeeding success. While 83.2% of infants are breastfed at birth, only 24.9% of U.S. infants are still exclusively breastfed at six months of age and there are persistent breastfeeding disparities by racial, geographic, and socioeconomic factors.

The American people, especially our babies, are the nation’s most valuable resource. We must take action through systemic interventions that ensure every baby is fed and every mother has the opportunity to reach their breastfeeding goals. Recent legislative wins like the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act clearly demonstrate that breastfeeding is a bipartisan policy issue. Thank you for your careful consideration of the following breastfeeding-friendly priorities you can move forward in the 118th Congressional Session:

**Increase Funding for Breastfeeding in the Federal Budget:**

*We urge Congress to invest in breastfeeding as a public health imperative.*

Human milk feeding plays a critical role in establishing good nutrition, healthy weight, and in reducing the risk of chronic disease. Funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program helps state and local governments, tribes, community-based organizations, and hospitals implement upstream interventions that support breastfeeding families and positively impact the health of the American people. Lactation support is also an important component of a wide range of federally funded programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program, State Physical Activity and Nutrition program, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, Healthy Start, and beyond.

**Address Gaps in Infant Nutrition Security Systems:**
We urge Congress to expand access to pasteurized donor human milk, advance a plan for infant and young child feeding in emergencies, reduce predatory marketing practices by formula manufacturers, and ensure the safety of commercial milk formulas.

This year, in addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many families also had to navigate the devastating infant formula recall and shortage. Policymakers must prioritize policies and investments for infant nutrition security so that we never find ourselves in this situation again. It is critical that the nation takes decisive action to build a robust infrastructure for infant nutrition security in the U.S. that holds all families in care.

Increase Support for Breastfeeding in Workplaces:
We urge Congress to establish a national paid family and medical leave program and address gaps in lactation accommodation protections for employees and students.

Employment policies in the United States make breastfeeding incredibly difficult. The United States is one of the only countries in the world without a national paid family and medical leave program, and nearly 1 in 4 employed mothers return to work within two weeks of childbirth. Many new moms return to work or school before the breastfeeding relationship has been firmly established, only to find themselves fighting for the right to pump breast milk during the work or school day. Without the time and space they need, they can lose their milk supply and risk painful infection.

Access to Lactation Support and Supplies
We urge Congress to advance legislation that increases access to telehealth services and improves community lactation support as part of comprehensive maternity and postpartum care.

Too often, new parents are left without the basic lactation support and supplies they need to start and maintain human milk feeding. The pandemic revealed that rural and economically marginalized urban communities with limited broadband lack access to telehealth lactation support services and gaps in continuity of care and community-based support services such as home visiting are widespread. Most health plans are required to cover the costs of lactation support services and breastfeeding equipment and supplies. However, implementation of the federal guidelines by insurance providers has been inconsistent, and many families struggle to access the supplies and services they need.

Maternity Care Practices
We urge Congress to take decisive action to confront the U.S. maternal mortality crisis, including working with and investing in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to increase the implementation of evidence-based maternity care practices that enable breastfeeding.

The United States is facing a serious maternity care crisis. Maternal mortality is higher than it was in previous generations, with significant and worsening disparities for women and families of color, particularly in Black and Indigenous communities. Maternity care practices play an essential role in reducing Black maternal mortality and infant morbidity while setting families up for breastfeeding success. These practices contribute to lifelong health and wellness.

As a member of the 118th Congress, we encourage your leadership on these critical policy priorities. Congressional history shows that breastfeeding is truly a bipartisan issue that legislators from both sides...
of the aisle can agree on. Families are counting on all of us to work together and eliminate the barriers that impede lactation success.

We look forward to working with you to advance these policy priorities.

**SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS**

*as of 2/13/2023*

**International, National, Tribal, Regional, and Cultural Organizations:**

- 9to5
- 1,000 Days, an Initiative of FHI Solutions
- A Better Balance
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Nursing
- American Association of Birth Centers
- American Breastfeeding Institute
- American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians
- American Public Health Association
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
- Baby Café USA
- Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.
- Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe Tribe
- Benten Technologies, Inc.
- Birthing Project USA
- Breastfeeding Family Friendly Communities
- Breastfeeding USA
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Center for Health Equity, Education and Research
- Center for Law and Social Policy
- Chocolate Milk Café National Inc.
- Cimilre Breast Pumps
- Coalition For Economic Justice
- Coalition For Lactation-Friendly Schools
- Consortium for Infant and Child Health
- Cubtale, Inc.
- Every Mother, Inc.
- First Focus Campaign for Children
- Futures Without Violence
- HealthConnect One
- Healthy Children Project, Inc.
- Healthy Horizons
- Heart For The Hopeless
- Human Milk Banking Association of North America
- Indigenous Breastfeeding Counselor
- International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners
- Jobs With Justice
- La Leche League Alliance for Breastfeeding Education
- La Leche League of the United States of America, Inc.
- Lactation Education Resources
- Lactation University
- March for Moms Association
- Mamava
- March for Moms
- Medela LLC
- Military Birth Resource Network and Postpartum Coalition
- MilkMate
- Mom Congress
- Mom2Mom Global
- MomsRising
- Mothering Justice
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
- National Association of Neonatal Nurses
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Lactation Consultant Alliance
- National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
- National Organization for Women
State, and Local Organizations:

Alabama:
Alabama Breastfeeding Committee

Alaska:
Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

Arizona:
Central Arizona Lactation Consultants Association

California:
A Family Affair
Alameda County Breastfeeding Coalition
API Breastfeeding Taskforce
Baby Café Bakersfield
Breastfeed LA
Caring Across Generations
Experience Birth & Beyond
Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Inland Empire Breastfeeding Coalition
Legal Aid at Work
Maternal and Child Health Access
San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition
Sonoma County Department of Health Services

Colorado:
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition

Colorado Children’s Campaign
Colorado Jobs With Justice
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
CREA Results
Cuenta Conmigo Lactancia
Denver WIC
Edgewater Collective
Elephant Circle
Guereca’s Consultants
Jefferson County Public Health
Kaizen Food Rescue
Latinas Community Connections Services
MotherJourney
Triad Early Childhood Council/Child Care Innovations

Connecticut:
Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition
Oh, Baby! Lactation Care

District of Columbia:
The District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition
Paid Leave For All

Florida:
Breastfeeding Coalition of Palm Beach County
Central Florida Jobs With Justice
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition
Florida West Coast Breastfeeding Task Force
Lactation Whisperer
MJ Lactation Services
Mothers’ Milk Bank of Florida
Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force
The Nest of Lakeland

**Georgia:**
Georgia Breastfeeding Coalition
Georgia Southern University
Wonderlove Lactation Services

**Hawaii:**
Beautiful Informed Beginnings LLC
Breastfeeding Hawaii
Hawaii Indigenous Breastfeeding Collaborative
Hawai’i Maternal Infant Health Collaborative/Early Childhood Action Strategy
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii
La Leche League of Maui
La Leche League of Oahu

**Idaho:**
LilyArden Lactation

**Illinois:**
Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes
North Central Breastfeeding Task Force
Precious Jewels Moms Ministries
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
Rock Island County Health Department
Whiteside County WIC Program
Women Employed

**Indiana:**
Dupont Hospital
Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Indiana Department of Health- WIC

**Iowa:**
Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition

**Kansas:**
Kansas Birth Justice Society
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

**Kentucky:**
College of Nursing, University of Kentucky
Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition
Willa, Nutrition & Lactation

**Louisiana:**
Birthmark Doula Collective

**Maine:**
Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition

**Maryland:**
Birth and Breastfeed with Confidence
Hands That Touch Home Health
Maryland Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition
Maryland Family Network
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners Maryland Chesapeake Chapter
Trinity Wellness
Westminster Pediatrics

**Massachusetts:**
Bay State Birth Coalition
Boston Medical Center Vital Village Networks
Massachusetts Lactation Consultant Association
Mothers’ Milk Bank Northeast
The Boston Breastfeeding Coalition

**Michigan:**
Breastfeed Macomb
Favor Community Services
Gratiot County Breastfeeding Coalition-Child Advocacy
Hurley Medical Center
InterCare Community Health Network WIC Program
Michigan Breastfeeding Network

**Minnesota:**
Gender Justice
Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition
Minnesota Milk Bank for Babies
Twin Cities Regional Breastfeeding Coalition

Mississippi:
East Mississippi Breastfeeding Coalition
Mississippi Breastfeeding Coalition
Mothers’ Milk Bank of Mississippi

Missouri:
Healthy Nourishments, LLC
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition
St. Louis Breastfeeding Coalition

Montana:
Billings Breastfeeding Coalition
Billings Clinic
Lactation Associates of Montana
Montana Association of WIC Agencies

Nebraska:
Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition
Touch of Gold

Nevada:
Breastfeeding Task Force of Nevada
Southern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition

New Hampshire:
Center for Autism & Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force

New Jersey:
A Shared Mothers Journey, LLC
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition
NJ Citizen Action

New Mexico:
New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

New York:
Ancient Song Doula Services
Bronx Breastfeeding Coalition
Joslyn Levy and Associates
Lehman College, CUNY
Long Island Lactation Consultant Association
Morrisiona D&TC WIC Program
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition
NYC Breastfeeding Leadership Council, Inc.
NYC Department of Health
Supporting Our Mothers Initiative
The New York Milk Bank

North Carolina:
Breastfeed Durham
Breastfeed Orange NC
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition
North Carolina Justice Center

Ohio:
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre Ltd.
Central Ohio Breastfeeding Coalition
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
Dayton Children’s Hospital
Marion Public Health 50
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance
The Ohio Women’s Public Policy Network
The Walker Group, LLC

Oklahoma:
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon:
African American Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon
Black Parent Initiative
Linn County Public Health WIC Program
Northwest Mothers’ Milk Bank

Pennsylvania:
CONVERGE at the University of Pittsburgh
La Leche League of Western Pennsylvania
National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section
Penn State College of Medicine
Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition
St. Luke’s University Healthcare Network
Women’s Law Project

Puerto Rico:
Alimentación Segura Infantil

Rhode Island:
Children’s Friend

South Carolina:
BirthMatters
Prisma Health Midlands Healthy Start
South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition

South Dakota:
Avera Behavioral Health – Outpatient Services
Early Learner South Dakota

Tennessee:
Comprehensive Care and Wellness
Memphis Area Lactation Consultant Association
Shelby County Breastfeeding Coalition
Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition

Texas:
Breastfeeding Perspectives
Kelsey-Seybold Clinic
Texas Breastfeeding Coalition
VAC | Westbrook Clinic

Utah:
Comunidad Materna en Utah

Vermont:
Family Center of Washington County
Milton Family Community Center
Orange County Parent Child Center Inc.
Parent Child Center of Northwestern Counseling & Support Services
Springfield Area Parent Child Center
Sunrise Family Resource Center
The Junior League of Champlain Valley
Vermont Donor Milk Center, Inc.
Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
Vermont Lactation Consultant Association
Windham Southeast School District’s Early Education Services

Virginia:
#757Breastfeeds
Breastfeeding Blues & Bliss, LLC
Healthy Families Newport News
Nurture

Washington:
Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington
South Sound Lactation Network

West Virginia:
West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance

Wisconsin:
Breastfeeding Alliance of Northeast Wisconsin
Lac Courte Oreilles Community Health Center, Maternal Child Health Program
Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants

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