

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Capito, and Ranking Member Baldwin:

On behalf of the 120 organizations and institutions committed to improving maternal and child health, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for your steadfast commitment to supporting programs aimed at reducing the incidence of stillbirth, so that fewer families endure this heartbreak tragedy. Thanks to your committees' leadership, stillbirth is finally beginning to receive the recognition and attention that it has long deserved, and we cannot afford to lose this hard-won momentum.

We are especially grateful for the Senate's continued support of our \$1.75 million level funding request and the House's increase of \$250,000 in funding to support ongoing implementation of the Stillbirth Working Group's recommendations at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). **As you consider the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill, we respectfully request that the final funding bill retain the House committee approved funding level of \$2 million to ensure this crucial progress continues.**

A pregnancy ending in stillbirth is a tragedy. In the United States, there are more than 20,000 stillbirths every year—that's 60 per day—often in healthy, seemingly low-risk pregnancies. Stillbirth affects 1 in 175 pregnancies and does not discriminate: impacting women of all races, ethnicities, income levels, and all ages. Mothers who experience a stillbirth are also more likely to die after delivery, and severe morbidity is nearly five times more common than in those whose babies are born alive. Studies indicate that at least 25 percent of U.S. stillbirths are preventable, meaning more than 5,000 stillbirths could be prevented every year. And yet despite staggering statistics and decades of medical advances, the U.S. stillbirth rate has not significantly improved over the last 20 years.^[1]

To address this public health issue, Congress provided initial funding of \$750,000 in the FY2022 appropriations law, directing the HHS Secretary to convene a Stillbirth Working Group, comprising of a multidisciplinary team of experts across the public and private sectors to examine barriers to data collection, known risk factors and high-risk communities, and assess the psychological impact and treatment for mothers. Recognizing the need for expanded efforts, the FY2023 appropriations law increased funding for the Stillbirth Working Group to \$1.75 million. The Stillbirth Working Group released its final report, Working to Address the Tragedy of Stillbirth, on March 15, 2023, with important recommendations that included, "creating and supporting a full research agenda, including research on both known and unknown risk factors and physiologic mechanisms, and to drive the development of interventions to ultimately prevent stillbirth."^[2] A follow up report, published in July 2024 provided implementation recommendations, emphasizing the need for ensuring high-quality data. Meaningful research and quality data is needed to drive effective prevention strategies which will lead to better outcomes.^[3] Building on this progress, Congress sustained funding of \$1.75 million in both FY 2024 and FY 2025 to prioritize the Department-wide implementation of these recommendations and promote evidence-based stillbirth awareness and prevention activities across HHS, though more work remains to fully implement these recommendations.

As such, we respectfully urge the Committee, as it moves forward with negotiations on the final FY 2026 LHHS appropriations bill to increase funding for the Stillbirth Working Group to \$2 million, aligning with the House committee-approved LHHS bill. This funding will support ongoing efforts to issue guidelines to state health departments and vital statistics units, which will improve stillbirth data collection, reporting, and timeliness. Every mother—urban, suburban, or rural—should have a healthy birth outcome, but unfortunately far too many don’t. With accurate and timely data, we can better understand the causes of stillbirth and develop effective prevention strategies. Our country continues to face a maternal and infant health crisis; despite being one of the wealthiest nations in the world, outcomes remain unacceptably poor. This additional funding will be instrumental in helping ensure U.S. families thrive, more babies survive and sustain momentum in addressing this preventable tragedy.

We greatly appreciate the ongoing support this program has received, and hope that it continues as we work together to bring about meaningful and lasting change! Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Please feel free to direct questions to Debbie Haine Vijayvergiya at debbie@dlh-associates.com.

[1] *What is Stillbirth?* | CDC. (2022, September 29). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/stillbirth/facts.html>

[2] “Stillbirth Working Group of Council.” Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, U.S. Department of Health, and Human Services, <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/advisory/council/stillbirth-working-group-of-council>.

[3] Page, J. M., Thorsten, V., Reddy, U. M., Dudley, D. J., Hogue, C. J. R., Saade, G. R., Pinar, H., Parker, C. B., Conway, D., Stoll, B. J., Coustan, D., Bukowski, R., Varner, M. W., Goldenberg, R. L., Gibbins, K., & Silver, R. M. (2018). Potentially Preventable Stillbirth in a Diverse U.S. Cohort. *Obstetrics and gynecology*, 131(2), 336–343. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000002421>

Sincerely,
1st Breath
A Better Balance
Aaliyah in Action
ACOG Vermont
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG)
American Medical Association (AMA)
Amniotic Fluid Embolism Foundation (AFE)
Ashlie's Embrace
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)
Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health (ASPPH)
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
ATIME/HUG
Babies Remembered
Baby Loss Family Advisors
Bay State Birth Coalition
California Chapter of Postpartum Support International
Centering Healthcare Institute
Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Cribs for Kids, Inc.
East Cascade Women's Group
Embrace Foundation
Every Mother Counts
Families Forward Resource Center
Families of Color Seattle
Family Health Initiatives
First Candle
Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth (GAPPS)
Griffin Cares Foundation

Group B Strep International
Healing with Wisdom
Healthy Birth Day Inc
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies- The Montana Coalition
HealthyWomen
Heart & Sol Collective
Hope After Loss Clinic at the University of Wisconsin
Hope for HIE
Hyperemesis Education and Research Foundation
I Was Supposed To Have A Baby
In the Arms of Jesus Comfort + Advocacy
International Partnership for Perinatal Excellence
Jaces Journey
JustActions
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Birth Justice Society
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kansas Infant Death and SIDS (KIDS) Network
Kentucky Primary Care Association
Las Cruces Doula
League of Women Voters Metropolitan Des Moines
Lifeline for Families and Lifeline for Moms Program at UMass Chan Medical School
M.A.M.A. Mom's Advocate & Maternal Advisor, LLC.
M.E.N.D. (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death)
Madison's Closet
March of Dimes (MOD)
Mass. PPD Fund
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Matties Memory Inc
Measure the Placenta
Mera's Mission
Midwives Alliance of Hawaii
Missing Pieces Support Group
Mom Congress
MomsRising
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National CMV Foundation
National Education Association (NEA)
National League for Nursing
NechamaComfort
Nemours Children's Health
New Brunswick Area NAACP
New Mexico DOH
New Mexico Doula Association
New York State Perinatal Association
Open Arms Perinatal Services
Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey
Patients For Patient Safety US
Postpartum Support International
Postpartum Support International Delaware
Postpartum Support International-Arizona Chapter
Postpartum Support International-Utah
Postpartum Support Virginia

Preeclampsia Foundation
Preemieworld Foundation
Propa City Community Outreach
Reproductive and Placental Research Unit, Yale University
Return to Zero: Hope
Saul's Light
Selah Care Farm
Shades of Blue Project
Share Parents of Utah
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM)
Society for Reproductive Investigation (SRI)
Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative
Speaking of Birth
St. George Share
Star Legacy Foundation
Star Legacy Foundation - Western New York Chapter
Start Healing Together
Stillbirth Advocacy Working Group (International Stillbirth Alliance)
Tender Lily Care
The 2 Degrees Foundation
The Iris Fund
The Marigold Foundation
The Natalie Foundation
The Orsini Way
The PPROM Foundation
The Shane Foundation
The Tara Hansen Foundation
Three Little Birds Perinatal
University of Utah
University of Utah Stillbirth Center of Excellence
Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition
Vermont Medical Society
Voices for Utah Children
What to Expect Project
Women and Children Counseling, Consulting, & Educating LLC
Yale University Reproductive and Placental Research Unit

CC:

Senate Majority Leader John Thune
Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer
House Speaker Mike Johnson
House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries

Senate Committee on Appropriations
House Committee on Appropriations

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The Honorable Steve Daines
The Honorable Raphael Warnock
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan

The Honorable Young Kim

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The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton