

June 25, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Senator Bennet,

The undersigned organizations committed to the health and wellbeing of mothers, infants, children and families applaud introduction of S. 3029/H.R. 6085, the *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018*, and support its swift passage.

Every day, one in ten infants is born premature in our nation. Preterm delivery can happen to any pregnant woman, and often its cause is unknown. Preterm birth is the leading contributor to infant death, and those babies who survive are more likely to suffer from intellectual and physical disabilities. In addition to its human, emotional, and financial impact on families, preterm birth places a tremendous economic burden on our nation. A 2006 report by the National Academy of Medicine found the cost associated with preterm birth in the United States was \$26.2 billion annually, or \$51,600 per infant born preterm. Employers, private insurers and individuals bear approximately half of the costs of health care for these infants, and another 40 percent is paid by Medicaid.

The original PREEMIE Act (P.L. 109-450) brought the first-ever national focus to prematurity prevention. For several years after its passage, preterm birth rates dropped by small but significant increments. Unfortunately, for the past three years, preterm birth rates have once again risen. In particular, troubling racial disparities in preterm birth persist, with black women experiencing preterm birth rates more than 50% higher than white women. Clearly, our nation must redouble its efforts to ensuring that every pregnancy and baby is as healthy as possible.

The *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018* demonstrates Congress's continued commitment to our most vulnerable infants and their families by supporting federal research and promoting known interventions and community initiatives. We applaud your sponsorship of this critically important legislation, and we strongly support its passage. If our organizations may be of further assistance, please contact Cindy Pellegrini at March of Dimes at cpellegrini@marchofdimes.org or 202/659-1800.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Birth Equity Collaborative
California Breastfeeding Coalition
Children's Dental Health Project
Children's Hospital Association
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Cribs for Kids
Every Mother Counts
Every Woman CT
Family Voices
Ferring Pharmaceuticals
First Focus
March of Dimes
MomsRising
National Hispanic Medical Association
National WIC Association
Nurse-Family Partnership
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association
Preeclampsia Foundation
PremieWorld, LLC
Prevent Blindness
Rhode Island Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Reproductive Investigation
Stanford University