

November 16, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
US House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
US House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone,

November is Prematurity Awareness Month, a time when advocates across the country work to raise awareness of and support for the 1 in 10 infants in the United States born too soon. The undersigned organizations urge you to act swiftly this November to help those impacted by preterm birth by taking up the *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018* and swiftly advancing it for a vote by the full House of Representatives.

Now is the time to act. After years of incremental decreases in the United States' preterm birth rate, there has been an alarming increase over the past three years. By enacting the *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018*, Congress can demonstrate its continued commitment to reversing this growing health crisis through federal research and promoting known interventions and community initiatives.

Premature birth is a significant threat to child health in the United States, taking a toll on families and placing an economic burden on our nation's health care and social services systems. Preterm birth is the leading contributor to death in the first year of life in the United States. Infants who survive often face a lifetime of health complications, including physical and intellectual disabilities. These complications impart a significant financial burden on families and the 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. Approximately 40 percent of the cost is paid by Medicaid. While preterm birth can happen to any pregnant woman, women of color are up to 50 percent more likely to deliver prematurely and their children can face a 130 percent higher infant death rate compared to white women. We must do better to ensure that every pregnancy and every baby is as healthy as possible.

The Senate has already acted to address this urgent health crisis by passing the *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018*. It is now up to the House of Representatives to approve the Senate-passed legislation and send it to the President for his signature. We call on you to take immediate action during Prematurity Awareness Month to advance the *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018* to a vote. If our organizations may be of any further assistance, please contact Rebecca Abbott with the March of Dimes at rabbott@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 Association of County and City Health Officials
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

cc:

The Honorable Michael Burgess, Chair, Health Subcommittee, House Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Gene Green, Ranking Member, Health Subcommittee, House Energy and Commerce Committee