

February 20, 2025

Dear Members of the 119th 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 needs and commit to protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding gives infants and their mothers important and long-lasting health protections that contribute to significant public health cost savings for our nationⁱ and has a profound impact on population health outcomes. The evidence for the value of human milk on overall health for infants and children is scientific, robust, and continually reaffirmed by new research. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be exclusively breastfed for approximately six months with continued breastfeeding while introducing complementary foods for two years or as long as mutually desired by the mother and child.ⁱⁱ Breastfed infants are at lower risk of certain infections, chronic diseases, and sudden unexplained infant death.

The majority of new mothers want to breastfeed.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, numerous barriers in healthcare, community, and employment settings impede breastfeeding success. While 84.1% of infants are breastfed at birth, only 27.2% 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.^{iv}

Low breastfeeding rates in the United States cost our nation millions of dollars through higher health system costs, lost productivity, and higher household expenditures.^v At the national level, improving breastfeeding practices through programs and policies is one of the best investments a country can make, as every dollar invested is estimated to result in a \$35 economic return.^{vi} Economists have completed cost-benefit analyses, finding that investments in nutrition are one of the best value-for-money development actions, laying the groundwork for the success of investments in other sectors.^{vii}

As a member of the 119th Congress, you have a powerful opportunity to address these barriers. The passage of the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act clearly demonstrates that breastfeeding is a bipartisan policy issue. Thank you for your careful consideration of the following policy opportunities:

Address Gaps in Infant Nutrition Security Systems: *We urge Congress to expand access to pasteurized donor human milk and advance a plan for infant and young child feeding in emergencies.*

Recent events have revealed deep vulnerabilities in our nation's infant nutrition security infrastructure. Pandemic-induced disruptions in maternity care practices that are foundational to the establishment of breastfeeding, the infant formula recall and resulting shortage, and a spate of weather-related natural disasters have demonstrated infrastructure gaps and a lack of resilience to safety and supply chain challenges, putting babies in danger during times of crisis. Policymakers must prioritize policies and investments for infant nutrition security so we never find ourselves in these situations again. In many scenarios, donor milk can be lifesaving for vulnerable infants, however, it is not equitably accessible to all families who need it.^{viii} Milk banks are located across 26 states and serve all 50 states, however, there are still significant barriers to access as many insurers are not required to cover the cost.^{ix}

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.

Expand Access to Paid Family and Medical Leave: *We urge Congress to establish a national paid family and medical leave program.*

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^x because they cannot afford to take unpaid leave or because they do not qualify for paid leave programs with their employer or through state or local programs. Many new moms return to work before the breastfeeding relationship has been firmly established. Paid leave is a key investment in both improving public health and helping American businesses.^{xi,xii} Lack of action on paid leave costs our economy nearly \$22.6 billion each year in lost wages alone.^{xiii}

Increase Access to Lactation Support and Supplies: *We urge Congress to address gaps in insurer coverage of lactation support and supplies and expand access to hospital and community-based lactation support.*

Too often, new parents are left without the basic lactation support and supplies they need to start and maintain human milk feeding. Most health plans are required to cover the costs of lactation support services and breastfeeding equipment and supplies.^{xiv} However, implementation of the federal guidelines by insurance providers has been inconsistent.^{xv} In addition, many state Medicaid programs do not include coverage of lactation support services.^{xvi} Community-based resources and support services provide critically needed support but are not available in all communities. As a result, many families struggle to access the supplies and services they need.

Improve Maternity Care Practices: *We urge Congress to take decisive action to confront the dual health crises of maternal mortality and suboptimal breastfeeding rates.*

The United States is facing a serious maternity care crisis. Research clearly demonstrates that maternity care practices have a significant and lasting impact on infant feeding outcomes^{xvii} as well as infant and maternal mortality, but evidence-based care is not accessible to many families.^{xviii} 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.^{xix}

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As a member of the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, we encourage your leadership on these important policy priorities. Congressional history shows that breastfeeding is truly a bipartisan issue. 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 develop bipartisan legislation that will advance these critical policy priorities to protect and promote the health and wellness of babies and their families.

## **SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS**

*as of 02/19/2025*

Number of signers: 315

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

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific  
Islander Lactation Collaborative  
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine  
Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Birth Centers  
American Breastfeeding Foundation  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American College of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists  
American Public Health Association  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and  
Neonatal Nurses  
A Better Balance  
Baby Café USA  
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.  
Barton Dunant  
Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving  
Support  
Breastfeeding USA  
Center for Parental Leave Leadership  
Center for WorkLife Law  
Global Military Lactation Community  
HealthConnect One  
Healthy Children Project, Inc.  
Healthy Horizons  
Human Milk Banking Association of North  
America  
Indigenous Women Rising  
INFACT USA  
International Board of Lactation Consultant  
Examiners  
International Childbirth Education Association  
International Lactation Consultant Association  
Lactations Consultant of America

Lactation Education Resources  
La Leche League Alliance for Breastfeeding  
Education  
La Leche League USA  
Luna County Parents as Teachers  
Mamava  
Medela LLC  
MomsRising  
National Association of Councils on  
Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of Neonatal Nurses  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse  
Practitioners  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Perinatal Association  
National WIC Association  
NEC Society  
Nourish & Thrive  
Nurturing Nectar  
Nurturings  
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc.  
Sage Transformations  
The Human Milky Way  
The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-  
Violence  
Reproductive Freedom for All  
United States Lactation Consultant Association  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee  
Veterans Health Administration  
ZERO TO THREE  
ZRF Group

### **State, and Local Organizations:**

#### Alabama:

Alabama Chapter - National Association of  
Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
Baobab Birth Collective

Gulf Coast Lactation  
Montgomery Area Community Wellness  
Coalition  
Mothers' Milk Bank of Alabama  
Nourish Wellness

Alaska:

Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

Arizona:

AZ Breastfeeding  
AZ Breastfed Babies  
Balance Pediatrics  
Banner  
Blue Stone Lactation, LL  
Cactus Bloom Lactation  
Milk Maven AZ  
Muttermilch Consulting  
Natural Progression  
North + West Valley Lactation  
Original Mami  
Pinal County Health Department WIC Program  
Southern Arizona Lactation Consultant  
Association  
Thrive Theory Lactation & Infant Feeding

Arkansas:

Arkansas Chapter - National Association of  
Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
Fairbanks Breastfeeding Coalition  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse  
Practitioners  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

California:

Alameda County Public Health Department  
Antelope Valley Breastfeeding Coalition  
Antelope Valley Partners for Health  
Baby Café Bakersfield  
BreastfeedLA  
Breastfeeding USA – LA City Chapter  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
California WIC Association  
Embrace Material Wellness  
Experience Birth & Beyond

Golden State Midwifery  
InJoyLC  
Jessica Claire, IBCLC  
Kimbrow Lactation  
Kings County WIC Program  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.  
Nurturing Nectar  
Nurture Collective  
Nurture and Flow  
Petaluma Health Center  
Pretty Mama Breastfeeding  
Salud Para La Gente  
San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Sonoma County DHS  
Sweetmilk Lactation Support  
Tiburcio Vasquez WIC Program  
Tulare County WIC Program  
United Health Centers WIC

Colorado:

Children's Health Foundation Mothers' Milk  
Cuenta Conmigo Lactancia  
Bank at Rocky Mountain  
Latina Safehouse  
Motherhood Untamed Lactation  
Mothers' Milk Bank of Rocky Mountain  
Children's Health Foundation  
Nurture & Nourish  
The Breastfeeding Mama  
Yellowtail Lactation Consulting  
Virtual Breastfeeding LLC

Connecticut:

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition  
Yale School of Medicine

Delaware:

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware

District of Columbia:

Breastfeeding Center for Greater Washington  
DC Breastfeeding Coalition

Florida:

321 Lactation, LLC  
Blessedful Breastfeeding, LLC  
Breastfeed Bay Task Force  
Breastfeeding 305  
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition  
Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics  
Florida Department of Health- Clay County  
Florida Lactation Consultant Association  
GROW LAKELAND  
Lactation Lady Ellen LLC  
Lactation Whisperer  
Northeast Florida Lactation Coalition  
Northeast Florida Pediatric Society  
Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force  
The 321 Nest: Milk Drop Depot

Georgia:

Challenge Your Choices Dietetics LLC  
One Family Pediatrics  
Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere  
Wonderlove Lactation Services, LLC

Hawaii:

Beautiful Informed Beginnings  
Breastfeeding Hawaii  
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii

Illinois:

Central Illinois Breastfeeding Task Force  
Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative  
North Central Breastfeeding Task Force

Indiana:

Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
Randi Davis IBCLC

Iowa:

Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition  
The Iowa Baby Ladies

Kansas:

Amberwell Hiawatha

Ford County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Happy Latch Lactation Co. LLC  
Hutchinson Regional Medical Center  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Lactation Liz  
Reno County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Shine Lactation + Postpartum Support  
Smith County Memorial Hospital  
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Breastfeeding Coalition

Kentucky:

Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky, Inc.

Maine:

Maine State Breastfeeding Network

Maryland:

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine  
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition  
Milk Matters LLC  
Maryland Chesapeake Chapter - National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
Successfully Nurtured Collective LLC  
Symonette Strategies & Solutions  
The Bloom Collective  
Wild Fig Lactation

Massachusetts:

Boston Breastfeeding Coalition  
Brigham and Women's Hospital  
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition  
New England Mothers First

Michigan:

Michigan Breastfeeding Network  
Milk Like Mine  
Next Generation Family Services  
Lactation Lighthouse  
Petaluma Health Center  
Sacred Waters Collective  
Saginaw County Health Department

Southeast Michigan IBCLC's of Color  
Stanton Lactation & Feeding Therapy, LLC  
Center for 4th Trimester Care

Minnesota:

Minnesota Milk Bank for Babies

Mississippi:

Every Mother, Inc.  
Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy  
of Pediatrics  
South Mississippi Breastfeeding Coalition

Missouri:

Dancing For Birth  
Healthy Nourishments, LLC  
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition  
Nurture Lactation, LLC  
St. Louis Breastfeeding Coalition

Montana:

La Leche League of Montana  
Montana Breastfeeding Coalition

Nebraska:

MilkWorks  
Naturally Healthy Kids  
Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition

Nevada:

Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition

New Hampshire:

New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force  
New Life Midwifery Service

New Jersey:

Advocare Morristown Pediatric Associates  
Center for Breastfeeding Information Research  
Library  
Cooper University Health Care  
Holy Name  
Maplewood Lactation  
Morristown Medical Center

New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition  
La Leche League of the Garden State  
The City of East Orange WIC  
The Cooper Camden Baby Cafe

New Mexico:

Luna County Parents As Teachers Home Visiting  
Program  
New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

New York:

Black Women Do VBAC  
E-Chapter - National Association of Pediatric  
Nurse Practitioners  
Finger Lakes Lactation, LLC  
Flower City Lactation & Doula Services, LLC  
La Leche League Greenbush New York  
Montefiore Medical Center- Wakefield Campus  
Mother Forward  
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition  
Nourishing Pathways Lactation, LLC  
Robin's Nest Midwifery  
Supporting Our Mothers Initiative  
The New York Lactation Consultant Association  
The New York Milk Bank, Inc.

North Carolina:

Breastfeeding Family Friendly Communities  
Wholesome Lactation Care, PLLC

North Dakota:

Milkyways Lactation Services

Ohio:

Appalachian Breastfeeding Network  
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre  
Dayton Children's Hospital  
Marion Public Health  
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance  
Project Milk Mission  
The Boobie Whisperer, LLC  
UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital

Oklahoma:

Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates

Oregon:

African American Breastfeeding Coalition of  
Oregon  
Cascadia Lactation  
ItsaBelly  
Northwest Mothers Milk Bank  
Oregon Chapter - National Association of  
Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
Oregon Washington Lactation Association

Pennsylvania:

Golden Love Flows  
Luzerne County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Lycoming Lactation  
Midwife Center for Birth and Women's Health  
Nourish Lactation & Wellness LLC  
Pocono Breastfeeding Coalition  
Sunrise Lactation LLC  
Wellspring Chambersburg Hospital  
Zest Pediatrics of Fox Chapel

Puerto Rico:

Alimentación Segura Infantil  
Coalición para la Lactancia Materna en Puerto  
Rico

Rhode Island:

Urban Perinatal Education Center

South Carolina:

AfterBirth LLC  
BirthMatters  
Dreams with Open Arms  
Carolina Black Birth Workers Alliance  
South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition  
South Carolina Chapter - National Association of  
Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
The Baby Lady  
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network

Tennessee:

East Tennessee State University  
Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee

NikkiLee Health

Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition

Texas:

Baby Bloom Lactation  
Binational Breastfeeding Coalition  
Brazos Valley Breastfeeding Coalition  
Breastfeeding Perspectives  
GRMC - Birthing Center  
Mère  
Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin  
Natural Beginnings Lactation, LLC  
South Texas Alamo Chapter - National  
Association of Pediatric Nurse  
Practitioners  
Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Texas Pediatric Society  
The Breast Choice Lactation Services

Utah:

Utah Chapter - National Association of Pediatric  
Nurse Practitioners

Vermont:

University of Vermont Medical Center  
Vermont Breastfeeding Network  
Vermont Donor Milk Center, Inc.

Virginia:

Birth in Color  
Physicians to Children  
The King's Daughters Milk Bank  
Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition  
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of  
Pediatrics  
Virginia Council of Nurse Practitioners  
Virginia Midwives Alliance

Washington:

Educational Opportunities for Children &  
Families  
Kitsap County Lactation Coalition  
South Sound Lactation Network  
Southwest Washington Healthy Families

Washington State Lactation Collaborative

West Virginia:  
West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance  
West Virginia Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics

Wisconsin:  
American Family Children's Hospital at UW Health Hospital and Clinics in Madison, WI  
Native Breastfeeding Coalition of Wisconsin

The Breastfeeding Alliance of Northeast Wisconsin  
Waushara County Health Department  
Wisconsin Chapter - National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

Wyoming:  
Laramie Breastfeeding Coalition  
Natrona County WIC  
Wyoming Department of Health

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<sup>iv</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2024). *NIS-Child data results*. <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding-data/survey/results.html>

<sup>v</sup> Alive & Thrive. (2022). *The cost of not breastfeeding tool*. <https://www.aliveandthrive.org/en/the-cost-of-not-breastfeeding-tool>

<sup>vi</sup> Walters, D., Eberwein, J. D., Sullivanb, L., D'Alimontec, M., & Shekara, M. (2017). An investment framework for meeting the global nutrition target for breastfeeding. In *World Bank Group*. [https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/862561490038192552/pdf/113618-BRI-PUBLIC-Breast-4-web.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*sy8id4\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MjMyNzgOODAxLjE3MjU2NDYxMTY](https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/862561490038192552/pdf/113618-BRI-PUBLIC-Breast-4-web.pdf?_gl=1*sy8id4*_gcl_au*MjMyNzgOODAxLjE3MjU2NDYxMTY)

<sup>vii</sup> Shekar, M., Kakietek, J., Eberwein, J. D., & Walters, D. (2017). An investment framework for nutrition: reaching the global targets for stunting, anemia, breastfeeding, and wasting. In *Washington, DC: World Bank eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1010-7>

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<sup>x</sup> Lerner, S. (2020). *The real war on families: Why the U.S. needs paid leave now*. In *These Times*. <https://inthesetimes.com/article/the-real-war-on-families>

<sup>xi</sup> McSwigan, C., Colavito, A., & Moller, Z. (2024). The US economy needs paid leave. *The Third Way*. <https://www.thirdway.org/memo/the-us-economy-needs-paid-leave>



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- <sup>xiii</sup> Glynn, S. J. (2020). *The rising cost of inaction on work-family policies*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/rising-cost-inaction-work-family-policies/>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Women's Preventive Services Initiative. (2023). *Breastfeeding services and supplies*. <https://www.womenspreventivehealth.org/recommendations/breastfeeding-services-and-supplies/>
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- <sup>xvii</sup> Patterson, J. A., Keuler, N. S., & Olson, B. H. (2018). The effect of Baby-friendly status on exclusive breastfeeding in U.S. hospitals. *Maternal and Child Nutrition*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.12589>.
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