

McCollum introduces the Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act

Written by

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WASHINGTON, DC –To coincide with Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day, US Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) last week introduced the Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act of 2009 (H.R. 1410), a bipartisan bill which seeks to restore America’s leadership through a global health strategy to keep mothers and children in the world’s poorest countries alive and healthy—before, during, and after childbirth.

Every year, more than 9 million children under age five, and 536,000 women, die from pregnancy-related causes and other treatable diseases that are preventable with simple, affordable interventions, including antibiotics, vaccines, bed nets, exclusive breastfeeding and vitamins.

“Making motherhood safe and keeping children alive is a global health priority for me, and I want to make it a priority for this Congress and the Obama Administration. The Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act is an important step toward restoring our nation’s commitment to reduce child mortality and maternal deaths. U.S. leadership is essential to save the lives of the millions dying needlessly. A commitment to the survival, safety, success of women and girls is necessary to reshape our bilateral relationships and redefine our nation’s foreign assistance investments,” McCollum announced while delivering the keynote address at the U.S. Agency for International Development’s International Women’s Day celebration.

The Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act calls for a U.S. strategy, puts forth goals, outlines interventions needing investment in order to save the lives of children and mothers. Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and advocacy groups, like Save the Children, are among the early supporters of the bill.

"No parents should have to bear the pain of seeing a child die from illnesses like diarrhea, pneumonia and malaria, all of which can be prevented or treated inexpensively," said former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D., chair of Save the Children's child survival campaign, Survive to 5. "This legislation will mean simple, cost-effective tools to save more than 5 million children each year are within closer reach of families throughout the world."

“U.S. leadership and investments in global child survival programs have helped to decrease under-5 child deaths dramatically in many countries. Despite this progress, more than 25,000 children under-five still die each day of highly preventable causes,” said David Oot, head of

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health and nutrition at Save the Children and chair of the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival. “This House action will help save the lives of mothers and babies by bringing proven, affordable health measures to families in communities that need them.”

The Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act of 2009 has been endorsed by the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival, Save the Children, U.S. Fund for UNICEF, and the Global Action for Children. The bill will:

- Commit to proven, low-cost, highly effective techniques for life-saving interventions that will save the lives of newborns, children, and their mothers.
- Develop a comprehensive, integrated U.S. strategy for reducing child and maternal mortality.
- Establish a Newborn, Child, and Maternal Health Task Force to maximize U.S. ability to leverage investments to reduce child and maternal mortality.
- Authorize funding for child survival and maternal health programs to help save the lives of hundreds of thousands of newborns, children, and mothers, in 60 poor countries.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations.