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NEWS RELEASE

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Key Legislation for Children in Poor Countries Tops 100 Cosponsors

Arlington, VA - Last week the Global Child Survival Act added its 100th cosponsor to its growing list of champions. Senator Bob Corker, a Republican from Tennessee, joined the ranks of 21 other senators and 78 representatives in supporting bicameral and bipartisan legislation that seeks to save the lives of millions of children under 5.

What is killing these children? Most Americans think the leading cause is HIV/AIDS, according to recent polls, but that only accounts for three percent of global child deaths. Malaria is only another eight percent. The largest portion die from causes that no longer threaten most children in the United States: birth complications and preventable or treatable infections such as pneumonia, diarrhea, measles and tetanus - all worsened due to malnutrition. The interventions to save these lives are known, readily available and cost-efficient. Yet nearly 27,000 children under five continue to die each day - that's nearly 10 million every year.

The vast majority of these lives could be saved through access to a package of simple low-cost services and practices like antibiotics to treat pneumonia, oral rehydration solution to treat diarrhea, and vaccines to prevent life-threatening childhood diseases. But, these measures are not available to all mothers and children who need them.

The Global Child Survival Act would ramp up resources for newborn and child health programs, and make these solutions more available to the poorest families who need them. Through the leadership of Sens. Gordon Smith and Chris Dodd, the bill introduced in the Senate will be taken up on February 14 - Valentine's Day. A House Foreign Affairs subcommittee will hold a hearing on the legislation next month. This legislation would renew American leadership in saving young lives by authorizing additional resources, creating an inter-agency Child and Maternal Health Task Force to make sure every dollar goes where it's needed most, expanding the Child Survival and Health Grants Program, and requiring annual progress reports from the president.

"U.S. leadership led to a 60 percent reduction in global child mortality between 1960 and 1990, but funding for these health programs has not kept pace with the need. I believe we should continue to provide aid and assistance where we can make a real difference," noted U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-TN), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "By supporting the Global Child Survival Act, we have the opportunity to renew our commitment to saving the lives of children and improving the health of mothers around the world."

In a recent national poll conducted by the US Coalition for Child Survival, almost all Americans, including both Democrats and Republicans, placed saving children's lives as a top priority for U.S. international assistance, and a large majority of Americans (84 percent) supported increasing resources to reduce the top preventable deaths of young children. Nearly six million lives could be saved each year by careful spending



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targeted at community-level health services in the 60 developing countries where 94 percent of child deaths occur.

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The US Coalition for Child Survival is a broad coalition of organizations and individuals united to strengthen United States and global commitment to improve the survival and health of children in developing countries. The Coalition represents non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, universities, foundations, corporations, and private voluntary organizations. For more information, see www.child-survival.org.