



# FAQ

## Global Child Survival Act of 2009 (S. 1966)

### Child Survival Talking Points

When discussing child survival issues with friends, colleagues, Members of Congress, and other interested persons, remember to highlight our main talking points:

- **Today, more than 24,000 children under age five will die**, mostly from preventable or treatable causes, such as diarrhea and pneumonia. This is the equivalent of about 8.8 million children dying every year.
- **We know what works.** Research shows that effective low-cost tools – such as vaccines and antibiotics – could save the lives of more than 5 million of these children.
- **The U.S. should develop a comprehensive strategy to save the lives of children**, with clear goals for reducing child mortality. Improved coordination and accountability, with increased funding for effective child health programs, is critically important.

### What is child survival?

Every day, more than 24,000 children between birth and age 5 die, mostly from preventable diseases and conditions. Factors such as malnutrition, unsafe drinking water, and inadequate access to vaccines contribute greatly to global child mortality. We know how to prevent most of these deaths, but we have not spent the resources necessary to do so. Nor is there a coordinated, aggressive, and accountable system in place to address this global tragedy.

### What is the goal of the Global Child Survival Act of 2009?

This legislation is about strengthening the U.S. Government's role in saving the lives of children and mothers in poor countries. To accomplish this goal, the bill authorizes the development of a strategy to reduce child mortality, improving the effectiveness of global health programs while providing increased coordination, accountability, as well as additional investments in proven, low-cost health interventions.

### Isn't a lot of money already going to child and maternal health (for example, to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria)?

Over the past several years, the U.S. has significantly increased funding for programs to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria in specific countries – and that is very important. However, nearly 90 percent of child deaths are caused by preventable and treatable diseases and conditions other than HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Unfortunately, funding for programs to address other basic health needs of children – such as immunizations, nutrition assistance, and treatments for diarrhea and other infections – has not kept pace. And many countries with the most serious child mortality rates in the world receive no funding from the United States to prevent child deaths.

Further, this is true despite the fact that health care interventions for children are very inexpensive. For example, oral rehydration therapy costs about \$0.07 per treatment, while antibiotics for respiratory infections cost \$0.25 per treatment. Also, medicines to treat the seven most common neglected tropical diseases cost approximately \$0.50 per person per year.

### **Why should Congress provide more funding for helping children in poor countries, given tight budgets and problems here in the U.S. that need funding?**

For approximately \$7 per American each year, we can save the lives of millions of children and mothers. Poll after poll shows that a vast majority of Americans consider child survival a priority for our country. A national poll conducted by Lake Research Partners found that almost all Americans (95 percent) believe that child survival is an important issue facing the world today and 84 percent support increased funding to address the top preventable causes of death among children under 5.

### **Why does the U.S. Government need a new strategy for newborn, child and maternal health – why not just provide more funding for existing programs?**

U.S. funding and programs for child survival have helped save millions of lives over the past three decades. But we have reached a stage where, in too many countries, current and stand-alone programs are not enough to cut child mortality rates. All too often, different U.S. government funded programs are uncoordinated and fail to maximize their overall effectiveness in saving the lives of children and their mothers.

Newborns have been particularly neglected in policies and programs, with the result that nearly 40 percent of all deaths of children under the age of five occur in the first 28 days of life. Yet research has shown that most of the 3.7 million newborns that die every year could be saved by training parents in some simple care practices and by making sure health workers have training to help newborns with complications. Save the Children's "Saving Newborn Lives" projects, which deliver simple, cost-effective, community-based interventions in rural Bangladesh and India, have demonstrated a 50 percent reduction in newborn mortality.

International health experts believe that existing, low-cost child survival interventions could prevent a substantial proportion of current child deaths - if implemented through effective, efficient strategies and targeted to reach those most in need of assistance. Scaling up interventions that work will have a dramatic impact on reducing child mortality when they are made available to all mothers and children who need them.

**for further information, contact**

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