US COALITION FOR CHILD SURVIVAL

Summary

Global Child Survival Act of 2009 (S. 1966)

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Continued U.S. leadership to address global child health will greatly impact families in developing countries around the world.

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The State of Global Child Health

Every year, more than 8.8 million children under age five die, mostly from preventable and treatable diseases and conditions.

- More than 24,000 children die every day. Pneumonia, diarrhea and complications during childbirth are leading causes of death. Malnutrition is an underlying contributor in over half of these deaths.
- An estimated 3.7 million newborns die in the first 28 days of life (40 percent of under-5 deaths).
- Nearly 20 percent of under-5 deaths occur in just 10 developing countries.

Proven, cost-effective interventions can save the lives of millions of children per year.

- Pneumonia, diarrhea, low birth weight, sepsis, birth trauma, and malaria - all of which are generally preventable or treatable conditions - are the leading causes of death for children under the age of 5.
- Despite success in immunizations in reducing polio, tetanus, and measles, vaccines still do not reach 24 million children. Nearly 2.5 million children die each year from diseases for which vaccines are readily available.
- Oral rehydration therapy (ORT) has helped to reduce diarrhea deaths by half, saving an estimated 1 million lives annually; yet more than 1.5 million children still die from diarrhea-related causes each year.
- Essential newborn care - including immunizing mothers against tetanus, ensuring clean delivery practices in a hygienic birthing environment, drying and wrapping the baby immediately after birth, providing necessary warmth, and promoting immediate and continued breastfeeding, immunization, and treatment of infections with antibiotics - could save the lives of millions of newborns annually.

- Improved sanitation and access to clean drinking water can reduce childhood infections and diarrhea. Over 40 percent of the world's population does not have access to basic sanitation, and more than one billion people use unsafe sources of drinking water.

United States leadership saves lives.

- The United States has joined 188 countries in supporting the Millennium Development Goals for 2015, including the reduction of under-five mortality by two-thirds (goal 4).
- The significant commitment of the United States to reducing child mortality in the developing world contributed to a 50 percent reduction in the mortality of children under the age of 5 between 1960 and 1990. In the past ten years, under-five mortality has dropped by 20 to 50 percent in 15 USAID-assisted countries.

What the Global Child Survival Act Would Do

To restore United States leadership in improving the health of newborns, children, and mothers, the Act would:

- Require the United States Government to develop an integrated strategy for reducing mortality and improving child health, with an intentional focus on at least 40 countries with the highest mortality rates.
- Create a U.S. Government interagency Task Force on Child Survival to coordinate activities directed toward achieving global child health goals.
- Establish guidelines for child survival programs, including the strengthening of local capacity and self-sufficiency, partnerships with non-governmental organizations, participation by local communities, and coordination with other donors.
- Require the President to submit an annual report to Congress detailing U.S. efforts to promote child survival and health globally.
- Continue investments in proven, cost-effective international child health programs, including GAVI Alliance and UNICEF.
- Authorize a proportional expansion of the Child Survival and Health Grants Program created by Congress to help further American commitment to improving the survival and health of children.

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