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## U.S. Commitment to Global Child Survival Act of 2007 Tips on Writing a Letter to the Editor

*Writing a letter to the editor can be a highly effective strategy for reaching the U.S. public and members of Congress and their staffs. The letters section of the newspaper is one of the most widely read. Letters to the editor are usually short statements that respond to a previous story, or that express an opinion about a relevant issue or event.*

*Each newspaper has specific rules, so make sure to check before you submit your letter. Remember to keep the letter brief (about 250 words) and make it timely (send it on the day that the article you're responding to has run). In writing your letter, speak to the editors, be clear, focus on one topic, avoid grammatical or factual errors, and avoid any personal attacks. Close your letter with the thought that you'd like readers to remember. Make sure to include your contact information with your name, address, email and phone number.*

### Sample Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

As Americans prepare to honor mothers throughout our nation this Sunday, it's a blessing to know that most will never have to endure the unbearable pain of losing a child.

Thanks to modern innovations — clean drinking water, vaccinations, sanitary birth conditions, antibiotics — diseases and infections that claimed so many young lives a century ago are no longer a concern in this country.

For mothers in the world's poorest nations, however, losing a child is an all too common occurrence. Each day, 28,000 children die, mostly from preventable disease and malnutrition.

Several members of our U.S. Congress want to change that and they've prepared the perfect gift for mothers throughout the world. It's called the U.S. Commitment to Global Child Survival Act of 2007. This legislation, introduced by Representatives Betty McCollum (D-MN), Christopher Shays (R-CT), and others would authorize \$600 million in 2008 — increasing steadily through 2012 — to help reduce child deaths by two-thirds and maternal deaths by three-quarters by 2015.

Previous investments in child survival have attained remarkable results. For example, as the U.S. increased assistance for measles vaccinations in the 1980s and 1990s, immunization rates rose dramatically. Child deaths from measles plummeted from three million a year to half a million, where it stands today.

All in all, there are 20 affordable interventions each costing \$25 per child that could save 6 million children a year. For example, a 2-cent capsule of Vitamin A given two to three times a year prevents blindness and death. Only half the young children in poor countries receive this treatment. An additional half million children could be saved if all had access to this nutritional supplement.

No mother, anywhere in the world, should have to lose a child. It is a burden members of Congress have the power to lift from millions this Mothers Day by becoming co-sponsors of the U.S. Commitment to Global Child Survival Act of 2007.