

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Farr,

We respectfully ask that you provide at least \$6.366 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which is in line with the President's request, and which would fully fund WIC's important breastfeeding promotion efforts at the authorized level of \$90 million.

As you know, WIC is the premiere preventive public health nutrition program supporting low-income mothers and young children (who have or are at risk) for developing nutrition-related diseases and disorders. WIC benefits are not limited only to food. An estimated 8 million women, infants, and children will benefit from its nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support, referrals to medical and social services, and a scientifically determined food package targeted to the specific needs of each population in the current fiscal year.

We cannot stress enough the importance of funding WIC to meet anticipated caseloads so that eligible women, infants, and children are not turned away. Failing to invest now means more high risk and at-risk women, infants, and children may find themselves cut from the program, miss out on its many benefits, and result in higher costs in the long run for the American taxpayer.

Within the total requested, we ask you to provide the following amounts:

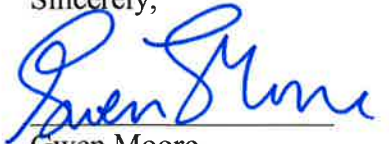
- \$90 million for the WIC breastfeeding peer counselor program
- \$75 million for Management Information Systems and to support the transition to an electronic WIC benefit system by 2020.
- \$6 million to boost the fruit and vegetable voucher for breastfeeding women by \$2 per month.
- \$14 million in infrastructure funding which supports a variety of items related to building the systems required to run an efficient and effective WIC program.
- \$26 million for Program Initiatives and Evaluations to conduct studies and evaluations on the program.


Compared to the small investment per participant, studies have repeatedly shown that WIC improves birth outcomes for high-risk mothers, reduces the likelihood of very low birth weight babies, and helps to get women into prenatal care earlier. Children enrolled in WIC are more likely to be immunized on time, consume key nutrients, and have higher cognitive development scores than their peers not participating in WIC. These outcomes change lives and save taxpayer dollars.

Breastfeeding promotion is a core component of WIC. Between 1998 and 2014, the number of WIC women who initiated breastfeeding rose from 41.3% to 69.8%. Research continues to reinforce breastfeeding as the best source of nutrition for infants as it provides numerous health, nutritional, economical, and emotional benefits for mother and infant. According to one estimate, if 90% of US mothers exclusively breastfed their infants to 6 months, the U.S. would save \$13 billion annually in medical expenses and prevent over 900 deaths a year.

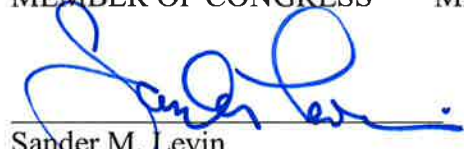
Again, we strongly urge you to fully fund WIC in the FY 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill. We appreciate your consideration of this important request and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the health of nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children.

Sincerely,


Gwen Moore
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


John Conyers
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

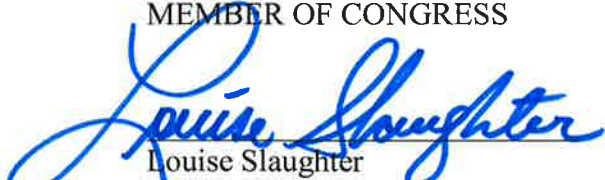

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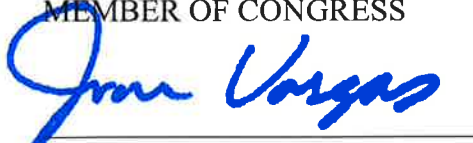

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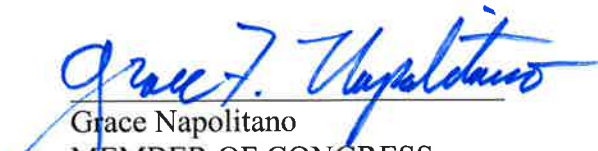

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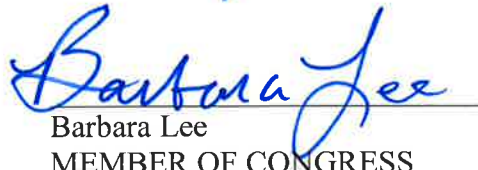
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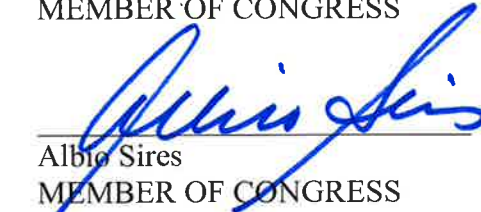
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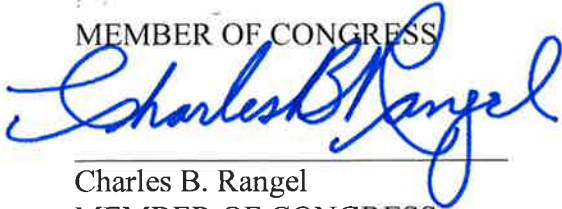


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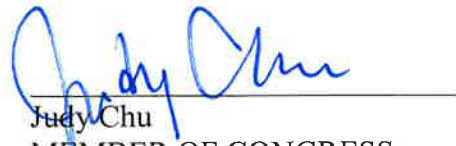
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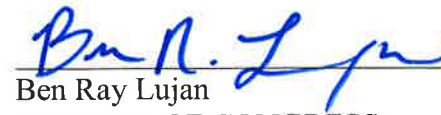
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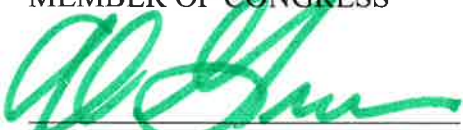


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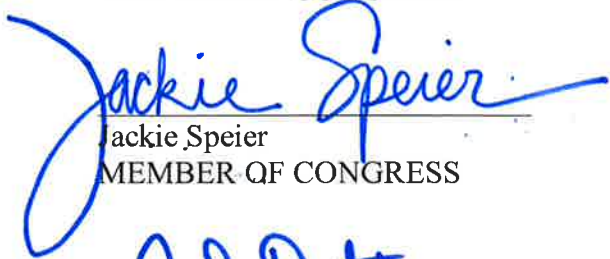
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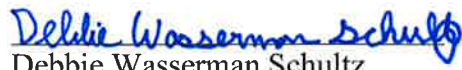
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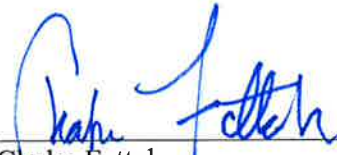
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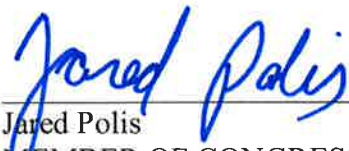
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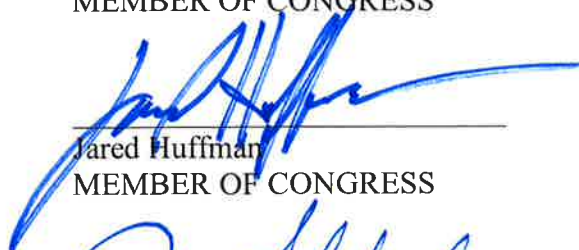
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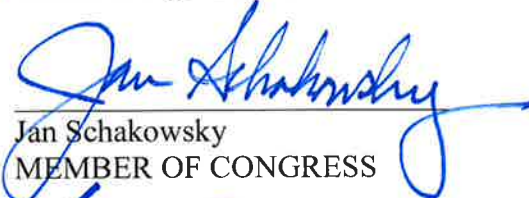
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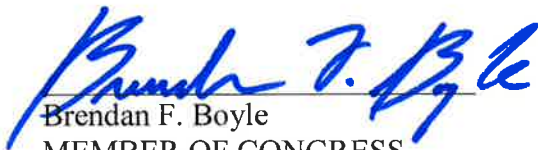
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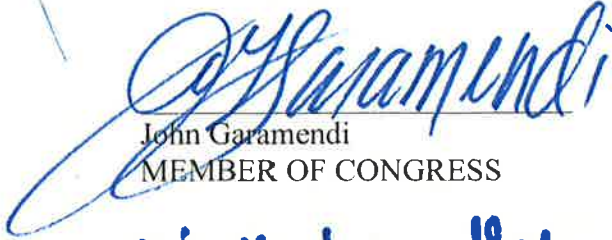




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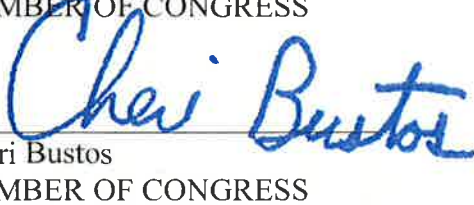
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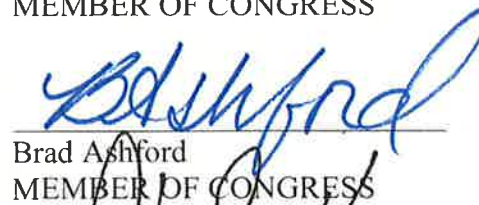
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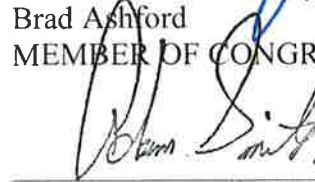
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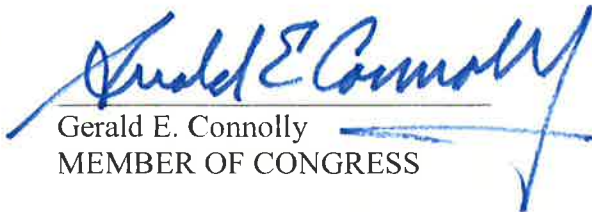
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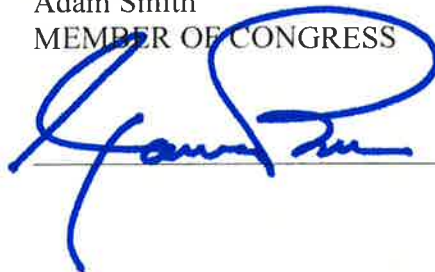
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