

**FRIENDS OF THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR  
WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)  
c/o National WIC Association**

November 4, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1026 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in strong support of increasing the Fiscal Year 2020 funding levels for the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program to its fully authorized amount of \$90 million, as included in the Agriculture/FDA appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives on June 25, 2019. On October 31, 2019, the Senate advanced a Senate Fiscal Year 2020 Agriculture/FDA Appropriations bill that allocated only \$80 million to this critical set-aside. **We urge conferees to adopt the House funding level of \$90 million.**

Breastfeeding promotion and support is a core element of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). WIC's Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, first authorized in 2004 and expanded in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, plays a pivotal role in advancing this mission, providing peer-to-peer support for breastfeeding mothers. The Peer Counselor Program is a proven success, with research demonstrating that peer support improves breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity among WIC mothers. The program also creates jobs in communities across the country and empowers low-income women to pursue careers in lactation consulting or healthcare.

Both chambers have acted wisely to increase funding for this effective breastfeeding support, but the fully authorized amount of \$90 million is needed to meet a program goal of providing peer counselor services in every local agency. Only 53% of pregnant and postpartum women are enrolled in peer counseling and over 30% of local agencies do not have access to a peer counselor at all. Despite this demonstrated need, the Peer Counselor Program has not received a funding increase in nearly a decade, and some states have had to reduce their services as fixed costs increase with inflation.

Funding the Peer Counselor Program at \$90 million will not require additional investment in WIC's overall appropriation or a reduction of the rescission included in both the House and Senate bills. Likewise, funding the Peer Counselor Program at \$90 million will not inhibit WIC's ability to serve current caseload with a total of \$6 billion in FY 2020 funding.

We applaud the decision of both chambers to strengthen the investment in WIC's breastfeeding support and collectively urge conferees to adopt the House funding level of \$90 million in the final FY 2020 Agriculture/FDA Appropriations Bill, finally recognizing the full amount authorized under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

1,000 Days

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Advocates for Better Children's Diets

American Academy of Nursing

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Breastfeeding Institute

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Heart Association

American Public Health Association

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses

Black Mothers Breastfeeding Association

Bread for the World

Child Care Aware® of America

Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association

Children's Health Fund

Children's HealthWatch

Coalition on Human Needs

Coffective, LLC

First Focus Campaign for Children

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBCLE)

La Leche League Alliance for Breastfeeding Education

La Leche League USA

March of Dimes

Mom2Mom Global

MomsRising

National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of Professional and Peer Lactation Supporters of Color

National WIC Association

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Nurse-Family Partnership

Pettaway Pursuit Foundation

Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere

RESULTS

Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior

Trust for America's Health

U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

ZERO TO THREE

## Regional and State Organizations

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee  
Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition  
Appalachian Breastfeeding Network  
Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Arizona Breastfeeding Coalition  
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
California WIC Association  
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates  
Healthy and Free Tennessee  
Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition  
Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky (LINK)  
Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition  
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition  
Massachusetts WIC Directors Association  
Michigan Breastfeeding Network  
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Michigan WIC Association  
Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition  
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition  
Missouri WIC Association  
Montana Association of WIC Agencies  
Nebraska WIC Association  
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force  
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.  
New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force  
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.  
Nutrition First  
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance  
Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition  
Pennsylvania WIC Association  
Texas Association of Local WIC Directors (TALWD)  
Vermont Breastfeeding Network  
Vermont Lactation Consultant Association, Inc.  
Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition  
Utah WIC Association  
WIC Association of New York State, Inc.

## Additional State or Local Stakeholders

Acadiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
Adagio Health  
Allegheny County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Aquarian Hands Life Services  
Baby Whisperer Lactation Consultants  
Balanced Wellness  
BASHbyBri

Be Empowered Doula  
Being Born  
Birth & Beyond, Inc.  
Birth In Color RVA  
Birth Your Way  
Black Families Do Breastfeed  
Boho Wellness, LLC  
Bold Selah LLC  
Breastfeeding Center of Pittsburgh  
BreastfeedLA  
Brown Baby Brigade, Inc.  
Ceremonia Birth and Healing  
Chaffee County Breastfeeding Coalition  
CHOICES  
Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE)  
Dallas Area Breastfeeding Alliance  
Dallas Lactation Consultant Association  
Foundation for Breastfeeding  
Forever Moments Keepsakes  
Gallo Birth Services  
HealthConnect One  
Healthy Children Project, Inc.  
Heart + Bloom Birth and Wellness Services  
Heart of Texas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Hey Mama Lactation and Perinatal Care  
Homeless Prenatal Program  
Impeccable Touch, LLC  
Lactation Love  
Liberation Center for Women  
Love & Soul Doulas  
Luminous Postpartum, LLC  
Kai's Butterflies  
Maame LLC, Inc.  
MadeWithLoveFL  
Mammissi Birth Services  
Maternal and Family Health Services  
Metro Detroit/Wayne County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Milk + Honey Co.  
MilkWorks Nonprofit Breastfeeding Support Center  
Move, Learn, Play  
Nemours/Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children  
Options in Childbirth  
Pause Breathe Connect  
Peaceful Transition  
Precious Jewels Moms Ministries  
Pretty Mama Breastfeeding LLC  
Prism Birth Services  
RosesHands  
San Antonio Breastfeeding Coalition  
Sankofa Lactation & Birthing Services  
So-Full Lactation Services

Spectrum Warriors, Inc.  
Summit Medical Group  
Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Tri-County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Tri-County Health Department  
Triangle Health Educators  
Twisted Faces LLC  
VB Maternity Wellness LLC  
Vital Village Network Boston Breastfeeding Coalition  
Urban Health Plan, Inc.  
Wells Kids  
Woman's Choice Charitable Association  
Women-Inspired Systems Enrichment  
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network

cc: The Honorable John Hoeven  
The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry