Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024) Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, **we urge you to provide $100 million for the Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies (SET-NET)** at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This funding would enable SET-NET to reach additional jurisdictions, track more threats, and lead the nationwide preparedness and response needed to protect pregnant individuals and infants in the United States from emerging and re-emerging public health threats.

The United States continues to grapple with ongoing public health emergencies that put our most vulnerable populations, including pregnant individuals and infants, at risk. SET-NET is an innovative data collection system that links maternal exposures during pregnancy to health outcomes for babies. Building on a mom-baby linked data collection approach developed in response to the Zika outbreak, SET-NET leverages existing data sources to enable CDC and health departments to detect the impact of new and emerging health threats on pregnant individuals and their babies. Findings from SET-NET help families, health care providers, public health professionals, and policymakers take action to save lives, reduce risk, and improve the health of pregnant individuals and infants.

In Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23), SET-NET provided support to 29 state, local, and territorial health departments to monitor the impact on pregnant individuals and their babies of exposure to Zika, syphilis, hepatitis C, COVID-19, and, new in FY23, congenital cytomegalovirus. With sufficient funding, SET-NET could expand to support up to 64 state, local, and territorial health departments as they collect, analyze, and report data on existing and emerging threats to pregnant individuals and their babies and broaden the scope of the program to conduct stillbirth surveillance and examine environmental hazards such as lead or perfluouroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The public health data infrastructure and surveillance systems established under SET-NET have contributed data critical to public health responses to new and emerging threats, including:

- Identification of pregnancy as an risk factor for severe COVID-19 and that a COVID-19 infection during pregnancy increased risk for preterm birth and stillbirth, underscoring the need for infection prevention and supporting a recommendation of vaccination during pregnancy;
- SET-NET data collected between 2018 and 2021 found a link between substance use during pregnancy and infants born with congenital syphilis, highlighting the need for syphilis screening and treatment at every health encounter during pregnancy for those using substances; and
- An analysis of SET-NET indicated missed opportunities to treat pregnant individuals with a hepatitis C virus infection prior to pregnancy, preventing transmission to the infant.

Investing in this sustainable framework for rapid, evidence-based data collection will ensure that the United States is prepared to meet the unique needs of pregnant individuals and infants during public health emergencies. Thank you for your consideration of this **request to provide $100 million for the Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies program in Fiscal Year 2024** to fully fund a national preparedness and response network focused on pregnant individuals and infants.

Sincerely,

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress
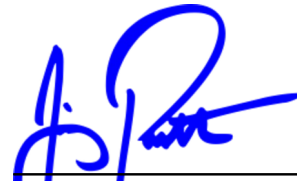
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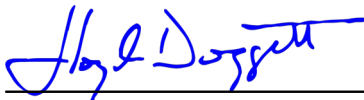
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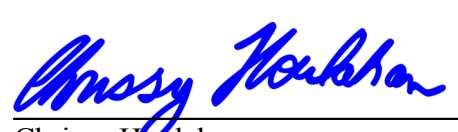
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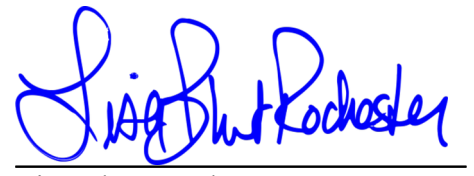
Lori Trahan
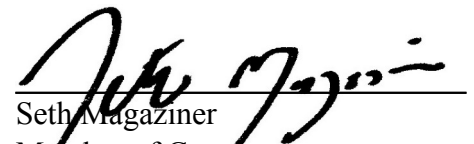Member of Congress

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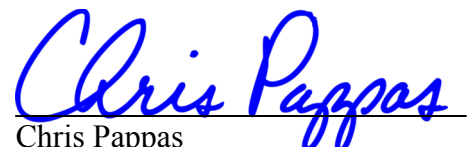
Lisa Blunt Rochester
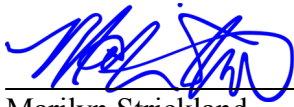Member of Congress

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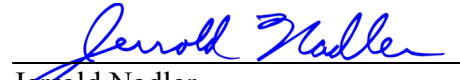Member of Congress

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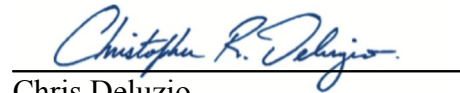Katie Porter
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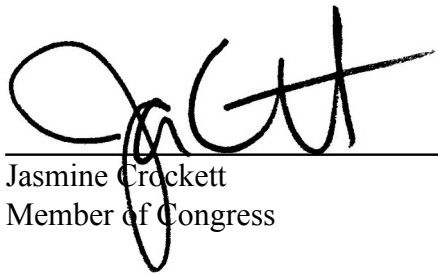Member of Congress

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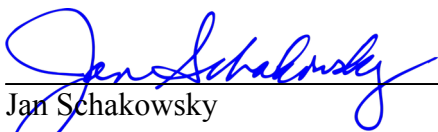Jasmine Crockett
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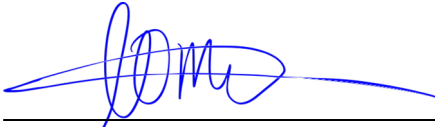
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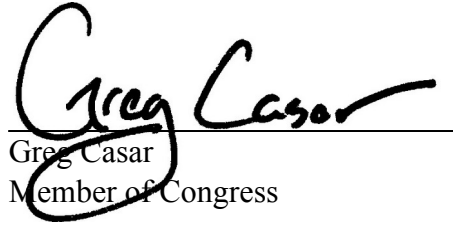Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

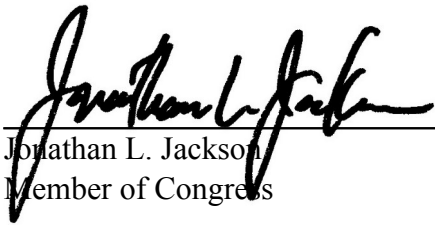Jan Schakowsky
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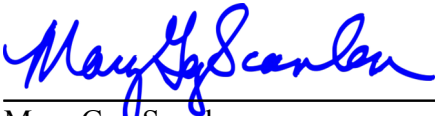
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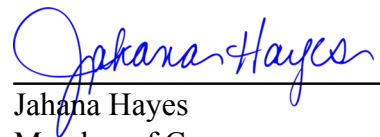
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