

XX-XX-2012

The Honorable FIRST LAST
U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
ROOM BUILDING
Washington, DC ZIP

Dear SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE LAST:

As Congress considers the FY 2013 Budget Resolution and Agriculture Appropriations, we strongly urge you to reject any funding cuts that will damage the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). While there are signs of economic recovery, sustained high unemployment and underemployment require that vulnerable mothers and young children continue to receive WIC's critical nutrition assistance and healthcare services.

The President has proposed to fully fund WIC at \$7.041 billion, providing \$14 million for infrastructure, \$30 million in support of cost containment and program integrity for management information systems (MIS) and electronic benefit service delivery (EBT), and \$60 million for breastfeeding peer counselors.

Under the Budget Control Act of 2011, WIC is slated for automatic cuts in FY 2013 as it is not a program that is protected from sequestration. This could result in over 800,000 mothers and young children losing critical nutrition benefits. Rather than allowing a sequester to go into effect and critical WIC funds to be cut, Congress should agree to a balanced deficit reduction package to replace the sequester and protect low-income programs, particularly WIC, from any funding cuts.

For 36 years, WIC has received strong bipartisan support in Congress. WIC is a well-respected and highly regarded program that elicits support across political, ideological, ethnic, and socio-economic lines. Voters oppose cutting funding for WIC. A national survey of 1,000 likely November 2012 voters indicated nearly 3 in 4 Americans want WIC funding to remain the same or increase with nearly twice as many favoring an increase as wanting a reduction.

WIC is a short-term, mission-driven preventive public health nutrition program designed to influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in a targeted, high-risk population. WIC provides nutrition and breastfeeding education, nutritious foods, and improved healthcare access for low- and moderate -income women and children with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems. Nationally, WIC serves approximately 9 million mothers and young children per month, including 53% of all infants in the U.S.

WIC is effective, providing significant returns on investment and is itself a deficit reduction strategy.

- WIC improves the consumption of key nutrients, improves pregnancy results, and substantially reduces the likelihood of adverse birth outcomes which mean fewer premature births, fewer low birth-weight babies, and fewer fetal and infant deaths. It has also been shown to improve at-risk children's health, growth and development and prevent health problems. Investing a small amount in WIC now results in significant health care cost savings in the future.
- Preterm births cost the U.S. over \$26 billion a year, with average first year medical costs for a premature/low birth-weight baby of \$49,033 compared to \$4,551 for a baby born without complications. It costs approximately \$743 a year for a pregnant woman to participate in WIC with an average participation length of 13 months. For every dollar spent on a pregnant woman in WIC, up to \$4.21 is saved in Medicaid.
- Participation in WIC's prenatal counseling program is associated with an increased rate of breastfeeding initiation. In 2010, survey data indicated that 63% of WIC infants ages 6-13 months were breastfed up from 41% in 1998. Funding for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors has helped to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. It has been estimated that a minimum of \$3.6 billion would be saved if current US exclusive breastfeeding rates increased to at least 50% at 6 months old.

- WIC children have increased intakes of important nutrients for cognitive and physical development like iron, potassium, and fiber, and they have lower rates of anemia. In addition, four- and five-year-olds whose mothers participated in WIC during pregnancy have better vocabulary test scores than children whose mothers had not received WIC benefits. WIC nutrition education has been shown to lead to an increased consumption of whole grains, fruits, and lower-fat milk, and participation in WIC has been shown to reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect.

WIC is efficiently run with administrative costs, according to the USDA, averaging 9%, nationally.

WIC is entrepreneurial, funding approximately 25% of its food costs through cost-containment initiatives and not federal resources. In fiscal year 2010, \$1.7 billion in federal savings were generated through competitive bidding for infant formula and other cost containment initiatives to support approximately 1.9 million participants.

WIC increases demand for healthy food in local retail stores, encouraging them to stock WIC authorized and healthier foods making WIC healthy foods accessible to others in the community. In 2010, \$6.25 billion worth of WIC food benefits were spent in local economies.

With already low administrative costs and effective cost containment strategies, cutting funding from WIC means cutting mothers and young children off of the program and depriving young children of a healthy start on life and the opportunity to thrive. Cutting funding from WIC in the short-term will result in long-term health and economic consequences for the country.

No one denies that our nation is facing fiscal challenges, but balancing the budget on the backs of vulnerable, at-risk, low-income mothers and young children that need essential food and nutrition assistance is not the way to achieve financial or national security. We urge you to do everything in your power to protect our nation's struggling families from hunger and improve their nutritional health and well-being. As an efficient, entrepreneurial, and effective program that provides significant returns on investment and is itself a deficit reduction strategy, we strongly urge you to reject any funding cuts to WIC and the other nutrition programs and urge you to support the President's WIC budget request.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
 ACCESS Family Care
 AD House, Inc.
 Agency 299, Nassau County, NY
 Alabama Dietetic Association
 Alameda County Community Food Bank
 Alameda County Office of Education
 Alaska Dietetic Association
 Alcohol & Addictions Resource Center
 Allen County Health Department, Ohio
 Allen County WIC in Ohio
 Altarum Institute
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American Association for Health Education (AAHE)
 American Public Health Association
 American Red Cross WIC Program
 American Samoa
 Apple Processors Association
 Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition
 Arkansas Dietetic Association
 Ashtabula County Community Action Agency
 Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
 Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
 Association of State & Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors
 Auglaize County Health Department and WIC Program

Baby beloved, inc.
Baby gooroo
Bay Area WIC program, WI
Belleville Congregational Church UCC, MA
Best for Babes
Board of the International Childbirth Education Association
Bread for the World
Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon
Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre Ltd
Bronx Breastfeeding Coalition
Bronx Health Link
Brownstein Jewish Family Service
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
California Conference of Local Health Department Nutritionists (CCLHDN).
Cambridge/Somerville WIC
Capital Area Food Bank
Caring For 2
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
CBEACH
CEDA (Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc.
Center for Children and Families at the University of Notre Dame
Center for Communications, Health & the Environment (CECHE)
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Central Pennsylvania Dietetic Association
Cherokee Nation WIC Program
Child and Family Resources, Inc.
Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.
Child Care Solutions
Childbirth Graphics
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Friend
Children's Alliance of New Hampshire
Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, Kansas City, MO
Church Women United
Clark County WIC Program
Clinton County, IA Public Health
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
Community Action Partnership for Madison County
Community Action, Inc.
Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley
Connecticut Dietetic Association
Consumer Federation of America
Coshocton County Maternal and Child Health
Count Wellstart International
Cross-Lines Community Outreach, Inc
Cuyahoga County WIC Program
DC Breastfeeding Coalition
DC WIC
Dearborn County WIC, Indiana
Defeat Diabetes Foundation
Delaware Dietetics Association
Delaware Opportunities
Delta Health Care WIC Program
Early Care & Learning Council, Albany, NY
Earth Day Network

Edgerton Women's Health Center
El Rio Health Center
Elk River Health Services, Inc
Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium
Every Mother, Inc.
Feeding America
FGE Food & Nutrition Team
First 5 LA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Flexicare
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc
Food and Nutrition Network of Solano County
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
Franklin Hampshire North Quabbin WIC Program
Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Friends of Yates, Inc.
Gateway Northwest MCHN
Georgia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Health Imperatives
Healthy Children Project, Inc.
Hillcrest Family Services, IA
Hope Cottage Pregnancy and Adoption Center
Hudson Perinatal Consortium
Humility of Mary Health Partners Trumbull County WIC Program
Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Illinois Dietetic Association
Indiana Dietetic Association
Indiana Perinatal Network
Indiana Rural Health Association
Initiative Foods, LLC
Inter-Tribal Council, Inc. of Oklahoma
Iowa Dietetic Association
Jefferson County WIC, OH
Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit
Jewish Family Service of the Cincinnati Area
Jewish Federation of Nashville, Community Relations Committee,
Johnson County WIC Program
Kalindi Press & HOHM Press Publishers
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Kansas City's Childhood Obesity Collaborative-Weighing In
Kansas Dietetic Association
Kern County Network for Children
Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland CAC Head Start
La Crosse County WIC Program
Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky
Lamaze International
League of United Latin American Citizens
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
Lincoln County Health Department, MO
Logan County Department of Public Health, IL
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Louisiana Dietetic Association
Lucas County WIC Program
Maine Dietetic Association

March of Dimes
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition
Maryland Dietetic Association
Massachusetts Association of WIC Directors
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Maternal and Child Health Access
Maternal and Family Health Services, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Maternity Care Coalition
McLean County Health Department WIC Program, IL
Medela, Inc.
Medina County Health Department
Memorial Hospital Prenatal Care Coordination
Metropolitan NYC WIC Association
Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc
Minnesota Dietetic Association
Missouri Dietetic Association
Mohave County Dept of Public Health
Montana Dietetic Association
Morrisania D&TC WIC Program
Muskingum County WIC Program
National Advocacy Center, Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women - St. Louis Section
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National WIC Association
Nationwide Children's Hospital WIC Program
Nebraska Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Nevada Dietetic Association
New Hampshire Community Action Association
New Hampshire Dietetic Association
New Hampshire WIC Directors' Association
New Jersey Dietetic Association
NJ WIC Advisory Council
New Mexico Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition
Nia's Ark
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition
North Carolina Dietetic Association
North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
North Hudson Community Action Corporation
Northeast PA AHEC
Northeast Valley Health Corporation
Northwest Pennsylvania Dietetic Association
Nursing Mothers Counsel of Oregon
Nutricion Fundamental, Inc
Nutrition and Health Associates, WI
Nutrition First
NYC Breastfeeding Leadership Council
Ohio Public Health Association
Optimus Health Care, Inc.
Oral Health America
Oregon Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group
Oregon Public Health Association
Oregon Public Health Institute
Parents as Teachers
Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group (PNPG)
Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition

Philadelphia Dietetic Association
Pittsburgh Dietetic Association
Plainfield WIC Program
Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties
Portage Columbiana County WIC Program
Preble County WIC Program, Ohio
Project EAGLE Programs
Public Health Institute
Public Health Law & Policy
Pueblo Of Isleta WIC Nutrition Program
Pueblo of Zuni
Pueblo of Zuni Head Start Program
Pueblo WIC Program
Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition
Rhode Island Dietetic Association
Rural Health Corporation of NE PA
Saint Croix County WIC Project 31
Saint Mary's WIC Program in Reno, NV
San Francisco Department of Public Health
San Francisco Food Security Task Force
Seeds of Health, Inc
Seneca County Ohio WIC
Share Our Strength
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team
Soul Food for Your Baby
South Carolina Columbia Dietetic Association
South Carolina Dietetic Association
South Central Missouri Dietetic Association
South Central WIC Program, MA
South Dakota Dietetic Association
Southern Adirondack Child Care Network
Southern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition
Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.
Southwestern Community Services
Southwestern WI Community Action Program (SWCAP) WIC Project
Soyfoods Association of North America
Tapestry Health
Temple B'nai Israel
Texas Dietetic Association
The Access Community Action Agency
The Capital Area Food Bank
The Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice
The Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center WIC Program
The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
The Jewish Federations of North America
The MetroHealth System
The National Congress of Black Women, Inc.
The National Indian and Native American WIC Coalition (NINAWC)
The Wisconsin Dietetic Association, an Affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Tidewater Area Lactation Consultant Association
Tompkins County Health Department, NY
Tulare County Breastfeeding Coalition
TVCCA WIC
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Fresh Produce Association
United States Breastfeeding Committee
United States Lactation Consultant Association
Utah State Breastfeeding Coalition

Veritable Vegetable, Inc.
Vermont Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics
Vida Y Salud Health Systems
Virginia Dietetic Association
Voices for America's Children
Warren County Health Department, Warrenton, NC
Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Webster County Health Department
Wellness Pointe
WIC Association of NYS, Inc.
Williams County WIC
Winfield Township, DuPage County, West Chicago, IL
Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB)
Wisconsin State Dietetic Association
Wisconsin WIC Association
Wyandot County WIC
Zuni Tribe of New Mexico