

March of Dimes Foundation

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[marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org)  
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March 8, 2017

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1107 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2426 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ryan Costello  
U.S. House of Representatives  
326 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2111 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Herrera Beutler, Conyers, Costello, and DeGette:

On behalf of the March of Dimes, a unique collaboration of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community, and other volunteers representing every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, I would like to thank you for introducing H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2017.

The current rate of maternal mortality in the United States is alarming and unacceptable. While other developed nations have seen their maternal mortality rate decline over the last three decades, the United States' rate has more than doubled since 1987, and currently ranks 47th globally. The maternal mortality rate is three times higher among black women than white women across the country.

The United States can and must do better. The Preventing Maternal Deaths Act is an important step toward reversing this troubling trend in maternal death rates. Your legislation would provide grants to states to help establish maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) – interdisciplinary groups of local experts in maternal, infant and public health – to investigate cases of maternal death, identify system-wide factors that contributed to the deaths, and develop recommendations to improve maternal and infant health. MMRCs are unique in that they identify solutions targeted to the needs of pregnant women and mothers in specific states, cities and communities. H.R. 1318 would also establish a demonstration projects to help ascertain how best to address disparities in maternal health outcomes.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. The March of Dimes looks forward to working with you to promote the passage of the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2017 and improving maternal and infant health. For additional information, please contact Rebecca Abbott, Deputy Director of Federal Affairs, at [rabbott@marchofdimes.org](mailto:rabbott@marchofdimes.org) or (202) 659-1800.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Pellegrini  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Affairs