

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Christopher A. Coons
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Coons and Ranking Member Graham:

Thank you for your ongoing support of funding for the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Polio Eradication Initiative. We write to request that you provide at least level funding of \$65 million for this program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill.

This funding will enable USAID to continue its global leadership supporting high-quality immunization campaigns and polio surveillance, targeting evidence-based innovations to overcome barriers, and strengthening in-country capacity in order to interrupt polio transmission globally. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is one of the largest, most successful public-private health initiatives ever created. As a result of this global effort, nearly three billion children have been immunized, 18 million have been spared disability, and over 900,000 polio-related deaths have been averted. In addition, more than 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented thanks to the systematic administration of Vitamin A during polio campaigns.

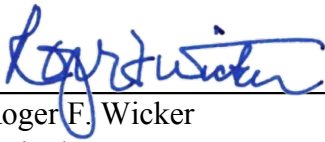
Global polio incidence has been reduced by more than 99 percent. However, until the world is polio-free, all children, even those in the United States, remain at risk. Only two countries currently have transmission of wild polio: Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Africa region was certified as being wild polio-free in August 2020 after Nigeria, the last polio-endemic country in Africa, marked more than three years without a case of wild polio. We need to complete polio eradication or we could face a potential global resurgence that could see as many as 200,000 annual cases of polio within a decade.

Similar to smallpox eradication, polio eradication is a cost-effective public health investment, as its benefits continue to accrue over time. The physical and human assets developed to eradicate polio have contributed to stronger overall immunization and health systems and have increased global capacity to respond to public health threats, such as Ebola, Zika, and COVID-19. GPEI-funded staff and assets have assisted the COVID-19 response in more than 50 countries utilizing the global polio surveillance network to detect COVID-19 cases, increasing lab testing capacity for COVID-19, and streamlining data management and information-sharing. In addition, thousands of GPEI-supported health workers have provided community education about COVID-19, assisted with contact tracing, and trained new health workers in the fight against the pandemic. These benefits, which exist because of polio eradication efforts, will continue to support global health security and benefit global public health long after polio has been eradicated.

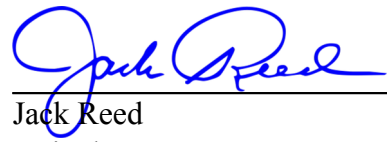
Continued U.S. leadership is essential to ensuring we capitalize on the historic opportunity to rid the world of polio once and for all. To continue this tremendous progress, we respectfully request your continued support for the polio eradication efforts of USAID in the FY2022 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



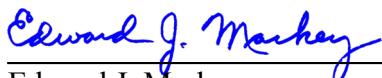
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



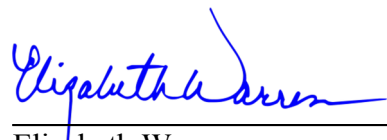
Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



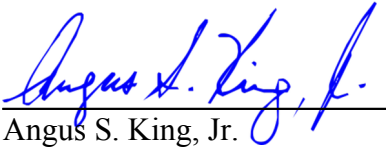
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



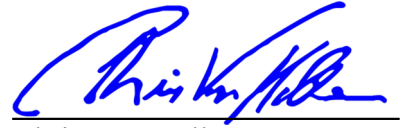
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



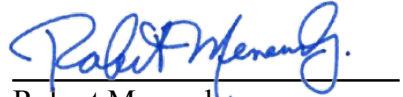
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



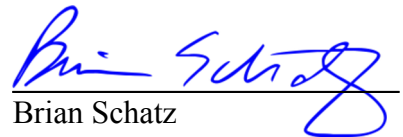
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator