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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6016

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-601

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member Farr,

We respectfully ask that you include the President's request of \$7.04 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2013 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

As you know, the WIC Program is a preventive public health nutrition program that provides nutrition and breastfeeding education, nutritious food prescriptions, and healthcare and social services referrals for low-income pregnant and postpartum women and their infants, as well as low-income children up to age 5 with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems. WIC currently provides services to over 9 million mothers and young children each month, reaching 53% of all infants in the U.S. The President's budget estimates monthly participation will average 9.1 million in FY 2013. The President's request will ensure that these women and young children continue to receive the support they need to create a strong foundation for healthy development and future success.

Research shows that poor prenatal nutrition increases the risk for pre-mature and low birth-weight babies. Additionally, poor nutrition during early childhood increases the chance of anemia, can limit memory development, and hinders a child's ability to learn. Poor nutrition early in life sets a trajectory for inadequate growth and development and increased risk for other health problems in the future, which result in increased health care costs.

Participation in WIC leads to healthy birth outcomes and healthier children. Numerous studies have shown that pregnant women who participate in WIC have longer pregnancies leading to fewer premature births; fewer low and very low birth-weight babies; experience fewer fetal and infant deaths; seek prenatal care earlier in pregnancy; and consume more of such key nutrients as iron, protein, calcium, and Vitamins A and C.

Therefore, WIC also contributes to reducing long-term health care costs. For example, the average first-year medical costs for a premature/low birth-weight baby is about \$49,033 compared to \$4,551 for a baby born without complications.

Breastfeeding is the optimal form of infant feeding with long-term health benefits for both mothers and children. For example, breastfeeding improves a baby's immune function and

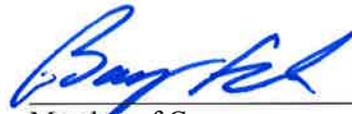
reduces its risk for developing obesity. We wholeheartedly support critical funding for breastfeeding peer counseling and breastfeeding performance bonuses that encourage States to continue to work to improve breastfeeding duration rates.

We also fully support the authorized funding levels for infrastructure and program evaluation included in the request, including funds allocated specifically to help States improve their management information systems and accelerate implementation of Electronic Benefits Transfers systems which will help further streamline administrative costs and support program integrity.

Again, please support \$7.04 billion for WIC in FY 2013. We appreciate your consideration of this important request and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the health of nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children.

Sincerely,

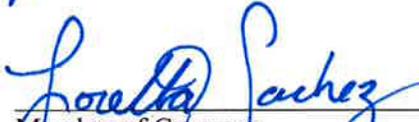

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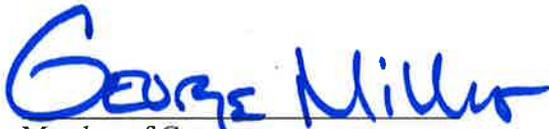

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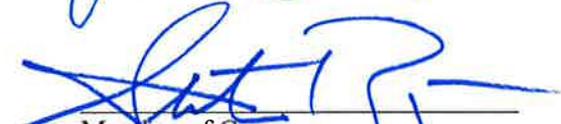

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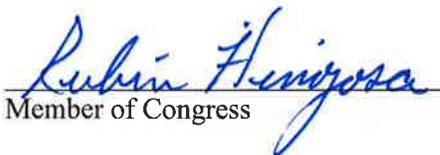

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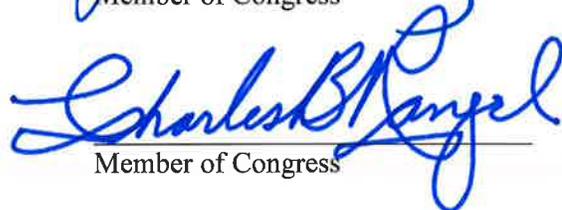

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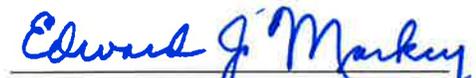
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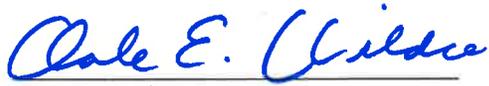

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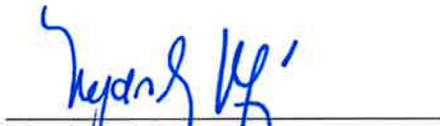

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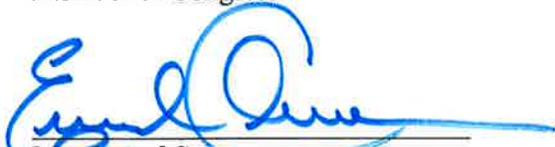

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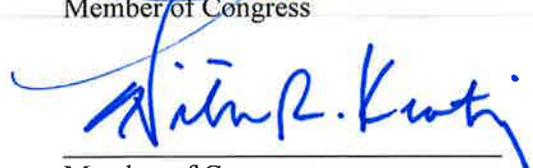

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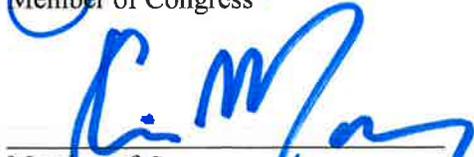

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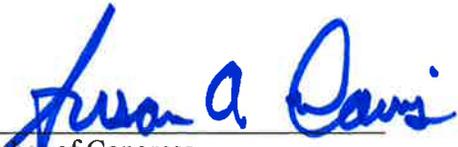

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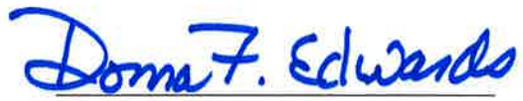

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