Dear Member of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, under the auspices of the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee-affiliated COVID-19 Infant & Young Child Feeding Constellation, urge you to support the bipartisan DEMAND Act of 2022 (Delivering Essentials to Mothers Amid Natural Disasters Act) (S. 3601/H.R. 6555).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing rate of natural disasters continue to reveal dangerous gaps in the emergency care systems serving families with breastfeeding babies. Infants are a highly vulnerable population, yet caregivers are too often left without access to support and supplies to ensure their infants’ basic nutrition needs are met in emergencies. The DEMAND Act would ensure that lactation support services and supplies are eligible expenses for emergency assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Critical Needs Assistance program.

Human milk is a critical component of food security, and during an emergency, lactation support must be part of the basic standard of care for America’s 3.7 million infants. The DEMAND Act is an important step to more equitably protect, promote, and support the feeding and care of infants and young children during emergencies. During an emergency, maintaining milk supply is of utmost importance. Lactation support providers can work with parents to protect their supply or encourage relactation, if possible. Equipment alone cannot provide this service, yet adding these as reimbursable expenses is one small, yet helpful step in supporting lactation throughout the disruptions caused by emergencies.

The evidence for the value of human milk to overall health for infants, children, and mothers is scientific, robust, and continually reaffirmed by new research. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be exclusively breastfed for about six months with continued breastfeeding while introducing complementary foods for at least one year. Breastfed infants are at lower risk of certain infections and sudden unexplained infant death. Children who were breastfed have decreased risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who have breastfed reduce their risk of specific chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers.

Everyone wants to do what is best for their baby, and most pregnant people and new mothers want to breastfeed. Yet barriers in healthcare, community, and employment settings continue to impede breastfeeding success, and there are persistent breastfeeding rate disparities by racial, geographic, and socioeconomic factors. These same populations experience many other health inequities, including lesser access to nutritious foods and a disproportionate burden of overweight, obesity, and chronic disease. All of these factors are magnified during emergencies, resulting in historically marginalized/unsupported communities enduring an outsized impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate matters. COVID-19 revealed fissures in our national capacity to coordinate infant and young child feeding in emergencies, destabilized already fragile maternity care practices that critically underpin breastfeeding initiation, and deepened known disparities. The pandemic and myriad natural disasters that have plagued the country in recent years demonstrate that our states lack the infrastructure to coordinate lactation support services and the provision of breastfeeding equipment during emergencies.

Given the importance of human milk feeding in establishing good nutrition and healthy weight and reducing the risk of chronic disease, we urge you to cosponsor the DEMAND Act of 2022. This is a
common-sense and important step toward ensuring optimal growth and development and preventing malnutrition, illness, and death among infants and young children during emergencies.

Sincerely,

CO-SIGNERS

**International, National, & Tribal Organizations**

A Better Balance
Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Academy of Pediatrics
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Baby Cafe USA
Birthmark Doula Collective
Breastfeeding Family Friendly Communities
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre Ltd.
Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association
Centro Pediatrico de Lactancia y Crianza
HealthConnect One
Healthy Children Project, Inc.
Human Milk Banking Association of North America
Indigenous Breastfeeding
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners
Joslyn Levy and Associates
Lactation Education Resources
La Leche League Alliance
La Leche League of the United States of America, Inc
Mamava
Mom2Mom Global and Breastfeeding in Combat Boots
MomsRising
MomsWork - National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section
Mothering Justice
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Partnership for Women & Families
National WIC Association
National Women’s Law Center

Pacify Health, LLC
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere
Rhia Ventures
The Lactation Network
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
U.S. Lactation Consultant Association

**Regional, State, and Local Organizations**

**Alabama**
Tennessee Valley Lactation Support

**Alaska**
Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

**California**
AANHPI Lactation Collaborative of California
Baby Cafe Bakersfield
BreastfeedLA
California Breastfeeding Coalition
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.
San Diego Breastfeeding Coalition

**Colorado**
Jefferson County Public Health

**Connecticut**
Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition
Connecticut Department of Public Health

**Delaware**
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware

**Florida**
Breastfeeding Coalition of Palm Beach County
First 1000 Days Florida
Lactation Whisperer
The Birth Company

**Georgia**
Georgia Breastfeeding Coalition
Hawaii
Breastfeeding Hawaii

Idaho
Idaho Breastfeeding Coalition
Nurture Lactation Support

Illinois
Precious Jewels Moms Ministries

Iowa
Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition

Kansas
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Louisiana
Community Birth Companion
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition

Maryland
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition

Michigan
Macomb County Breastfeeding Coalition
Michigan Breastfeeding Network
Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color

Missouri
Marillac Indigent Care Fund
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition

Nevada
Biggest Little Baby
Bright Heart Birth Services

New Hampshire
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force

New Jersey
Chocolate Milk Cafe North Jersey
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition
Solutions for Breastfeeding
Speaking of Birth

New Mexico
Family Promise of Albuquerque

New York
Bronx Breastfeeding Coalition
Mizaan Prevention Health Solutions LLC
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition
Sacred Crowning
St Charles Hospital
Supporting Our Mothers Initiative
Wholly Education

North Carolina
Momma's Village Fayetteville, Inc

Ohio
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance

Oklahoma
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates

Oregon
African American Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon
Black Parent Initiative

Pennsylvania
Center for Women - National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section
Western PA Lactation Consultants Association
Women's Law Project

Puerto Rico
Alimentación Segura Infantil

Tennessee
Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving Support
Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition

Virginia
Hummingbird Lactation & Wellness
Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition

Wisconsin
North Shore Health Department
Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants


