

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

July 25, 2018

Dear Secretary Azar and Secretary Ross:

The United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) and the undersigned organizations stand strongly for all families and fight for their health, safety, and well-being. We are concerned by reports that this spring the U.S. Delegation to the World Health Assembly (WHA) undermined a global resolution aimed at supporting breastfeeding, threatening trade sanctions against Ecuador before yielding to a proposal put forth by Russia. Breastfeeding is the nutritional standard for infant and young child feeding as recognized by scientific and health organizations worldwide. It is critical that international, national, and state policies work to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding so that every family who chooses to breastfeed has the opportunity to succeed. **We call upon our government to ensure that policy decisions and actions are based on current scientific evidence, free from industry influence, and carried out in accordance to global trade agreements and international law.**

The marketing of artificial infant foods in our healthcare facilities severely undermines individuals' rights to make informed decisions and act of their own free will, which is a fundamental aspect of our democracy. This is why these predatory practices are identified as detrimental to maternal and child health, and why the [International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes](#) is the global standard and needs to be implemented in the United States. Parents need to be informed of medical recommendations, which state that parent's own milk is a primary nutrition source, with safe donor milk as a fallback, and artificial alternatives when medically warranted.

We encourage the U.S. government to take steps to ensure that breastfeeding support is upheld as a primary prevention strategy in all domestic and foreign policy arenas. Breastfeeding builds a foundation for life-long health and wellness for mothers, babies, and all of society. It is considered a global maternal and child health imperative due to extensive research on infant feeding, which has consistently proved critical short- and long-term health risks of *not* breastfeeding, as well as significant costs of artificial milk feeding. **This abundance of evidence is why the WHA expects commitment by all nations to support the health of all families through breastfeeding support. To be clear, nothing in the WHA Resolution or any of the documents it referred to would have restricted access to formula.**

Breastfeeding has a critical role to play in mitigating the stark inequities seen globally in maternal, infant, and child health, as well as disaster and health security. Many diseases and deaths due to infant feeding are actually due to a lack of support for breastfeeding *and/or* a lack of the resources needed to acquire and safely prepare artificial milk (boiling water, clean bottles, etc). Breastfeeding is an important component of women's reproductive health from birthing to child spacing, and it touches all cultures around the world. In the U.S., more than

80% of women say they intend to breastfeed, but far fewer meet their goals. Adequate maternity leave, support for breastfeeding, and workplace accommodations are some of the fundamental programs that would allow women to achieve their goals.

When maternal and infant morbidity and mortality are at stake, any actions by organizations or governments that elevate corporate profit over public health is inexcusable. The U.S. and its leadership must stand up to industry lobbyists and support, promote and protect the health of parents and babies. We stand prepared and committed to lend our expertise to future efforts to support breastfeeding as the first food, both within the U.S. and in collaboration with our global family.

United States Breastfeeding Committee

International and National Organizations:

1,000 Days
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Birth Centers
American Breastfeeding Institute
American Nurses Association
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Attachment Parenting International
Baby Blessed Beginnings
Baby Cafe USA
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.
Black Mothers Breastfeeding Association
Breastfeeding in Combat Boots
Childbirth and Postpartum Professionals Association
Christopher's Consulting
Dignity Health
Every Mother, Inc.
HealthConnect One
Healthy Children Project, Inc.
Human Milk Banking Association of North America
ImprovingBirth
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners®
International Childbirth Education Association
Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee
Lactation Education Resources
Lamaze International
La Leche League USA

LiquidGoldConcept, Inc.
Make the Breast Pump Not Suck
Mamava, Inc
The Milk Mob
Mom2Mom Global
MomsRising
Mothers' Milk Bank, Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation
National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Professional and Peer Lactation Supporters of Color
National Perinatal Association
National WIC Association
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere
Women-Inspired Systems' Enrichment

Regional, Tribal, State, and Local Organizations:

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee
Alameda County Breastfeeding Coalition
Alimentación Segura Infantil
American Academy of Nursing
Appalachian Breastfeeding Network
Arkansas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Beaumont Health Family Medicine Center
Binational Breastfeeding Coalition
birth | Fort Worth
Birth and Breastfeed with Confidence

Boston Association for Childbirth Education
and Nursing Mothers' Council
Boston Breastfeeding Coalition
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware
Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington
Breastfeeding Coalition of Palm Beach
County
Breastfeeding Coalition of Solano County
Breastfeeding Coalition of South Central
Wisconsin
The Breastfeeding Connection
Breastfeeding Hawai'i
Breastfeeding Initiative of Ulster County
The Breastfeeding Partnership-Peer
Counselors
Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving
Support (BSTARS)
The Breastfeeding Success Company
BreastfeedLA
Bronx Breastfeeding Coalition
Butte Breastfeeding Coalition
California Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California WIC Association
Capital Area Breastfeeding Alliance
Central Texas Breastfeeding Coalition
Chaffee County Breastfeeding Coalition
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
Colorado Academy of Nutrition and
Colorado Lactation Consultant Association
Common Table Health Alliance
Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition
Dietetics
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition
The Developing Mother
Eastern Kentucky Breastfeeding Coalition
Erica the Doula, LLC
Florida Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Franklin County Breastfeeding Coalition
Foundation for Positively Kids
Geeky Gal Doula
Hawaii Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition
of Hawaii
Heart of Texas Breastfeeding Coalition
Holistic Lactation

Immunize Nevada
Indiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada
Iowa Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kitsap County Breastfeeding Coalition
La Leche League - Madison Area Chapter
La Leche League Tallahassee
Lactation Consultants of Central FL
Lactation Improvement Network of
Kentucky
M*Body Options Perinatal Support Services
The Macomb County Breastfeeding
Coalition
Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition
The Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition
Matrescence Lactation Consulting, LLC
Memphis Area Lactation Consultant
Association
Mendocino County Breastfeeding Coalition
Michigan Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics
Michigan Breastfeeding Network
The Milk Bank
Milkie Mama Lactation Support
MilkWorks
Minnesota Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics
Missouri Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition
Monroe County WIC
Morning Star Moms, Inc
Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin
Mothers' Milk Bank of Florida
Mothers' Milk Bank of Mississippi
Native Breastfeeding Council
Navajo Nation Breastfeeding Coalition
Nest Inc
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force
New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition
New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force
New York City Breastfeeding Leadership
Council, Inc.

New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
New York State Breastfeeding Coalition
Northern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition
Northampton Area Pediatrics
Northwest Mothers Milk Bank
Nutrition First
Nurture
The Nurturing Oasis LLC
Nutrition First
Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Ohio Lactation Consultant Association
Oklahoma Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Om Baby Pregnancy & Parenting Center
OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc.
Oregon Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)
Pennsylvania Mid-State Lactation Coalition
Perinatal Health Equity Foundation
Pretty Mama Breastfeeding LLC
Portage County Breastfeeding Coalition
Randolph Elkins Health Department - WV
WIC Program
Riverdale Lactation Center
Rochester Regional Breastfeeding Coalition
Sacramento Breastfeeding Coalition
Saline County Breastfeeding Coalition
San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition
San Jose Mothers' Milk Bank
Shelby County Breastfeeding Coalition - Tennessee
Snohomish County Breastfeeding Coalition
Southern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition
South Mississippi Breastfeeding Coalition
Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition
Tennessee Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Texas Breastfeeding Coalition
Tree of Life Lactation Therapy
The University of Minnesota Dietetic Internship
Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Vermont Breastfeeding Network
Vermont Lactation Consultant Association, Inc.
Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Wabaunsee County Health Department
Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
West County Health Centers, Inc.
West Virginia Emergency Medical Services
Technical Support Network, Inc.
Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition
Yakima Valley Breastfeeding Coalition