



September 15, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) would like to applaud your creation of the White House Council on Women and Girls. By leading the charge in our Nation to enhance, support, and coordinate programs for women and girls, you have demonstrated a clear commitment to issues affecting families such as equal pay, child care, and family leave.

Breastfeeding is one critical issue for women, girls, and the health of our Nation. As you know, the evidence for the value of breastfeeding to children's *and* women's health is scientific, solid, and continually being reaffirmed by new research. Breastfeeding also provides a range of economic and environmental benefits for society. The future prosperity of our country greatly depends on the productivity of women as workers *and* as mothers. Women's economic security and the health—emotional and physical—of mothers and families translates directly into the potential of our future workforce and the vigor of our economy.

Human milk is the optimal source of nutrition for infants, and the United States Breastfeeding Committee joins the United States Department of Health and Human Services in recommending that infants be exclusively breastfed for six months, and continue to breastfeed for the first year of life and as long afterwards as mutually desired by mother and child.

USBC actively works to reduce or eliminate the barriers to breastfeeding, including social, economic, political, media/marketing, and health care factors. Many barriers to successful breastfeeding continue to exist in our country. The White House Council on Women and Girls is a bold step that can help build a supportive breastfeeding environment for all women and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Joan Younger Meek'.

Joan Younger Meek, MD, MS, RD, FAAP, FABM, IBCLC  
Chair  
United States Breastfeeding Committee

cc: Valerie Jarrett, Chair, White House Council on Women and Girls  
Tina Tchen, Executive Director, White House Council on Women and Girls