

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 18, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy and Vice Chairman Shelby,

As you work towards a final agreement for the fiscal year (FY) 2022 appropriations bill, we urge you to include funding for our Nation's diaper banks. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one in three families struggled to afford enough diapers to keep their children clean, dry and healthy. The economic fall-out from the pandemic has exacerbated families' already strained budgets and greatly increased diaper need across the country. Affording material basic necessities, such as diapers, remains a barrier to the health and economic well-being of millions of Americans.

We must act now to end diaper need and provide economic security through an expanded partnership of non-profit organizations, businesses and the Federal government. Without enough diapers each day, infants and toddlers, as well as older adults and people with disabilities, are at risk of skin infections, open sores, urinary tract infections and other conditions that may require medical attention. Healthcare systems across the country are already strained due to COVID-19, and Americans should do all we can to avoid unnecessary hospital and emergency room visits.

Further, due to the pandemic, diapers have become even more expensive, while working parents and caregivers have lost income. That is why, last year, a bipartisan group of Senators wrote to Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt of Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee, requesting \$200 million through the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) to build a national grant program focused on distributing diapers to millions of families in need. This program would leverage an existing network of over 225 diaper banks and their more than 5,000 partner agencies across all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico. The funding would enable organizations and agencies to address a substantial backlog of unmet need, cover regional service gaps and yield a massive return on investment for children, families and communities across the country. This request was included in FY 2022 appropriations legislation passed by the House of Representatives last year.

Diaper banks across the country have seen drastic increases in distributed diapers, reflecting a level of need that has remained constant since the early days of the pandemic. While we understand that the FY 2022 appropriations package is not yet finalized, and tough decisions must be made, the requested funding would provide much-needed support for caregivers and allow them to focus on succeeding at work and keeping their families healthy. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in ensuring the American people—including the next generation—are set up for success.

Sincerely,



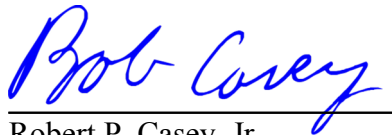
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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



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Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



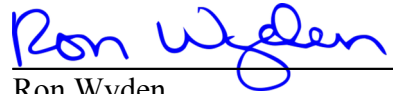
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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator



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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Cory Booker  
United States Senator

*Mazie K. Hirono*

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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

*Kirsten Gillibrand*

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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator