

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 18, 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 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  
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  
Mothers' Milk Bank, Rocky Mountain  
Children's Health Foundation  
National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National WIC Association  
Women-Inspired Systems' Enrichment

#### **Regional, Tribal, State, and Local Organizations:**

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee  
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  
Boston Association for Childbirth Education and Nursing Mothers' Council  
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware  
Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington  
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)  
BreastfeedLA  
Bronx Breastfeeding Coalition  
Butte Breastfeeding Coalition  
California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
California WIC Association  
Central Texas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Chaffee County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition  
Colorado Academy of Nutrition and Lactation Consultant Association  
Common Table Health Alliance  
Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition  
Dietetics  
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition  
The Developing Mother  
Erica the Doula, LLC  
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  
Holistic Lactation  
Immunize Nevada  
Indiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
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  
The Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition  
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition  
Matrescence Lactation Consulting, LLC  
Mendocino County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Michigan Breastfeeding Network

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.  
Northern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition  
Northwest Mothers Milk Bank  
Nurture  
Nutrition First  
Ohio Lactation Consultant Association  
Om Baby Pregnancy & Parenting Center  
OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc.  
Oregon Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)  
Perinatal Health Equity Foundation  
Pretty Mama Breastfeeding LLC  
Portage County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Randolph Elkins Health Department - WV WIC Program  
Riverdale Lactation Center  
Sacramento 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  
Texas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Tree of Life Lactation Therapy  
Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Vermont Breastfeeding Network

Vermont Lactation Consultant Association,  
Inc.  
Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Wabaunsee County Health Department  
West County Health Centers, Inc.  
Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and  
Dietetics  
Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition  
Yakima Valley Breastfeeding Coalition