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Deadline is COB Friday March 31st.

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we write urge you to provide \$1.13 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) national immunization program, which is authorized under Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act.

Vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in public health and are among the most cost-effective ways to prevent disease. Indeed, we know that for each dollar invested in the U.S. childhood immunization program, there are over ten dollars of societal savings and three dollars in direct medical savings. Moreover, childhood immunizations over the past twenty years have prevented 381 million illnesses and 855,000 deaths, and saved nearly \$1.65 trillion of dollars in societal costs.

The Section 317 immunization program acts as the backbone of our nation's public health system by supporting the science that informs our national immunization policy, helping uninsured and low-income adults pay for vaccines, monitoring the safety of vaccines, educating providers and performing community outreach, and conducting surveillance, laboratory testing, and epidemiology to respond to disease outbreaks. A robust immunization infrastructure – in addition to the vaccines – is imperative to support programs such as Vaccines for Children (VCF). VCF relies upon the critical infrastructure and operations funded through the Section 317 program to effectively serve millions of American children each year.

Annually, CDC distributes over 80 million doses of routinely recommended vaccines directly to health departments and private health providers across the country. CDC also continues to support national, state, and local immunization programs to address gaps in routine immunization coverage and encourage vaccine uptake. Unfortunately, vaccination coverage has dropped a total of two percentage points – from 95 percent reported in the 2019-20 school year to 93 percent in the 2021-22 school year. This means there are more than 275,000 kindergartners who may not be completely protected against common, and sometimes very serious, vaccine-preventable diseases.

Providing \$1.13 billion for the Section 317 program in FY 2024 would allow for continued critical efforts to boost vaccination rates as well as sustain the improvements made through the emergency supplemental bills to ensure both routine immunization is restored and future preparedness is assured. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this vital request.

Sincerely,
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