

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 12, 2018

The Honorable Nikki Haley
United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Haley,

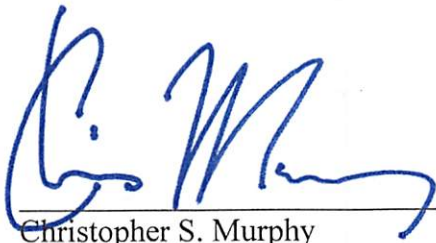
We write to express our deep concern over reports that the Trump administration sought to block a resolution recognizing the importance of breastfeeding at the May 2018 World Health Assembly. Given the longstanding support for the promotion of breastfeeding among World Health Organization (WHO) members, we seek additional information regarding why the administration opposed this resolution, and the degree to which U.S. officials threatened to impose punitive trade measures or withhold aid from countries that introduced or supported the resolution.

As you know, nearly 40 years of scientific research have demonstrated the benefits of breastfeeding for infant and child nutrition and development. Notable international organizations, including WHO, UNICEF and the American Academy of Pediatrics, have published statements detailing the benefits of breastfeeding, and promoted policies to increase breastfeeding rates. Further studies by The Lancet and Harvard Medical School found that breastfeeding could prevent more than 800,000 child deaths a year around the world and 3,340 premature deaths a year in the United States. Many families, however, choose to use infant formula. This is an important option for families who elect to use formula exclusively—or in addition to—breast milk. Women should have access to the most accurate information regarding the benefits and risks associated with infant nutrition methods, and countries should strive to limit inaccurate or misleading marketing campaigns.

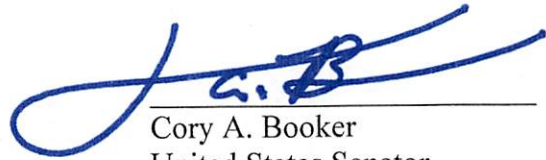
The administration's reported actions to pressure other countries from introducing the resolution or to remove language to "protect, promote and support breastfeeding" are particularly concerning, and we seek additional clarification regarding any threats to withhold foreign assistance or to punish countries through trade measures in response to actions related to the proposed resolution. The United States should be using its role in multilateral organizations to reach consensus on international agreements. Instead, in this instance as in other recent events, the United States has needlessly threatened and intimidated allies while ceding leadership on international policy to Russia.

As we work with you to improve maternal and child health, we request your insight into the administration's actions to oppose WHO's resolution recognizing the importance of breastfeeding, including any coordination you may have had with the Department of Health and Human Services. We look forward to receiving additional information regarding this situation in writing or in a briefing from your staff.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



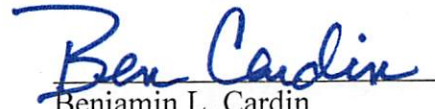
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



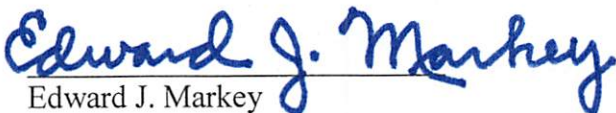
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



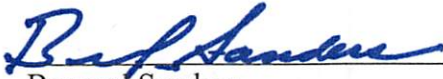
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator




Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



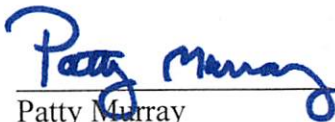
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



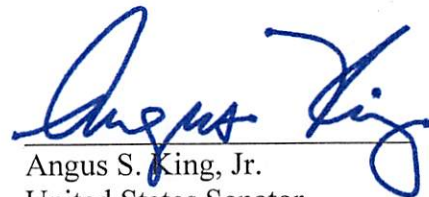
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator