

June 24, 2008 - Democratic Women Push Pres Bush for Greater Commitment to Address Maternal Mortality

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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Democratic Women Push
President Bush for Greater Commitment to Address Maternal Mortality

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today
Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28) was joined by 35 of her Democratic
Women colleagues in urging President Bush to make a greater commitment to addressing the global
epidemic of maternal mortality and calling on him to raise the issue of
maternal mortality at the upcoming G8 meeting in Japan in July.

President Bush has been
loudly calling on other partner nations in the G8 to follow through on their
previous pledges to provide \$60 billion to help African countries battle
diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS. While President Bush's efforts to
combat malaria and HIV/AIDS in Africa are
laudable, these efforts are jeopardized by neglecting to adequately address
maternal deaths in these countries. The limited progress in addressing
the devastating impact of maternal mortality globally has also hindered efforts
to eradicate poverty and encourage economic development.

"Each
day, thousands of women around the world die in childbirth," said Rep.
Slaughter. "We have a responsibility, not only as citizens of an
industrialized nation, but as human beings, to protect women from

these preventable deaths and promote safe motherhood initiatives. It is critically important that the United States lead the effort to combat staggering maternal mortality ratios and improve the lives of women and their children worldwide."

"President

Bush has a unique opportunity at next month's G8 summit in Japan to address maternal mortality and its devastating impact on families, communities, and countries," said Rep. Capps, Chair of the Democratic Women's Working Group. "Efforts to address many of his top humanitarian priorities such as fighting malaria and HIV/AIDS in Africa are directly undermined by the persistent plague of maternal mortality which claims the life of one woman every minute of every day. We will not be able to realize significant progress in combating global poverty and disease until we take significant steps to address the tragedy of maternal mortality and ensure that pregnancy and childbirth are safe for women no matter where they happen to live. We hope that President Bush seizes this moment and enables the U.S to provide real leadership on this issue that is so fundamental to human existence around the world."

BACKGROUND

The full text of the letter to President Bush can be found below:

June 24, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush

President of the United States

1600
Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C.
20220

Dear President Bush:

As you and members of your Administration prepare for the G8 Summit in Japan next month, we urge you to do all in your power to focus attention, action and resources towards achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goal #5, to reduce maternal mortality by 75 percent by 2015.

Mothers are the fabric of every society, yet childbirth claims the life of one woman every minute of every day. These preventable deaths lead to incalculable losses to families, children, communities, and economies around the world. Neglecting to address maternal death jeopardizes gains in reducing infant mortality and combating HIV/AIDS and malaria. It also complicates efforts to eradicate poverty through economic development.

The global disparities are especially shocking. While a woman's risk of dying in childbirth in industrialized nations is one in 7300, the risk in Sub-Saharan

Africa is one in 26. If the death rate associated with childbirth in some countries is hundreds of times higher than in others, we must make a greater investment in proven solutions to save women's lives.

We need a renewed focus on making pregnancy and childbirth safe for women no matter where they happen to live. You have been adamant in pressing other G8 members to fulfill their pledged investments to address HIV/AIDS. We encourage you and your team to show that same spirit of leadership in the area of maternal mortality.

The G8 meeting next month will be a prime opportunity to remind the other members of the G8 of this pressing issue and to rededicate all members of the group to working towards this critical goal. We respectfully request that you raise the issue of maternal mortality at the meetings, and for our part we stand ready to offer the assistance and support from the legislative branch in order to carry out this effort.

We thank you for representing our concerns and look forward to working with you to translate our pledges and promises into tangible results.

Sincerely,

1. LOIS
CAPPS

2.
JAN SCHAKOWSKY

3. GWEN
MOORE

4. LOUISE SLAUGHTER

5. HILDA L.
SOLIS

6. BETTY MCCOLLUM

7. CAROLYN
B. MALONEY

8. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

9. ZOE
LOFGREN

10.
CAROLYN MCCARTHY

11. DEBBIE
WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

12. ANNA ESHOO

13. DORIS
O. MATSUI

14. KATHY CASTOR

15.
STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

16. SHELLEY BERKLEY

17.
STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

18. MAZIE K. HIRONO

19. ELLEN
O. TAUSCHER

20. TAMMY BALDWIN

21. BARBARA
LEE

22. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

23. DARLENE
HOOLEY

24. DIANA DEGETTE

25. LUCILLE
ROYBAL-ALLARD

26.
LYNN WOOLSEY

27. ROSA L.
DELAURO

28. NIKI TSONGAS

29. ELEANOR

HOLMES NORTON

30. BETTY SUTTON

31. GRACE
F. NAPOLITANO

32. SUSAN A. DAVIS

33. EDDIE
BERNICE JOHNSON

34. CAROL SHEA-PORTER

35. JACKIE
SPEIER

36. DONNA EDWARDS

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