March 2, 2017

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
1107 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
2426 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ryan Costello
326 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
2111 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Herrera Beutler, Congressman Conyers, Congressman Costello, and Congresswoman DeGette:

On behalf of the Preeclampsia Foundation, we are writing to thank you for your leadership and to offer our strong support for the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2017. This important legislation will allow states to address preventable maternal deaths and the devastating and costly health consequences that threaten the lives of too many moms and their babies in our country today. The statistics on maternal death in the United States are staggering - the U.S. is ranked 50th globally for its maternal mortality rate, and the maternal death rate in the U.S. continues to rise.

The U.S. ranks behind other developed countries in maternal mortality rates, despite major advancements in medical technology and treatments. States and jurisdictions recognize the public health crisis they face, with alarming rates of maternal death among communities of color, but they need help to address the problems. Your legislation recognizes the first step forward is for a state to set up a maternal mortality review committee to assess available data on maternal deaths so that states and localities can use that data to identify effective and cost-saving interventions. Your legislation will support states to establish or advance their mortality review efforts and will promote national information-sharing through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) so that states can continue to learn from each other and collaborate as needed.

We are so pleased to support this bill, as preeclampsia and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (e.g., eclampsia, HELLP Syndrome) are a leading cause of maternal and infant death and severe health consequences. Every year in the U.S., up to 300,000 pregnant or postpartum women develop a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy with approximately 75,000 of them suffering organ failure, massive blood loss, permanent disability, or death; and premature birth or the death of their babies. Preeclampsia is characterized by a large rise in blood pressure and failing kidneys. Eclampsia is the name for seizures during pregnancy. While there is still no known cure
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for the hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, tragedy can often be avoided when symptoms are identified early and managed through pre- and post-natal care.

The Preeclampsia Foundation works in partnership with states and communities, health providers, and health systems to improve awareness about preeclampsia to prevent maternal death and disability. We have been encouraged by the progress of some states, and it is our goal to see your legislation move forward so that more states can utilize maternal mortality review systems and drastically improve the U.S. statistics on maternal death and disability across the country. Recent studies have shown that at least 41 percent of maternal deaths were likely preventable. No mom or baby should ever die from preventable circumstances.

On behalf of the 60,000 supporters of the Preeclampsia Foundation, including families across this country that have grieved the loss of a mom due to maternal death and on behalf of our clinical medical advisors, I thank you for your leadership and for raising awareness on this important issue. The Preeclampsia Foundation stands ready to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to advance this needed legislation. Please contact our Washington, DC, representative, Julie Allen at (202) 230-5126 or Julie.allen@preeclampsia.org if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Eleni Tsigas
Executive Director