CHAMPIONS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

July 18, 2017

Members of the United States Congress:

We are members of Champions for America's Future, a national, bipartisan organization of athletes and coaches who have come together to make sure every child has the best opportunity to compete in life.

Our experiences training to reach the pinnacle of athletics have given us insight into the immense value of having a good coach. But the most important coach in a child's life is their first coach: A parent or guardian who guides a young child during their most crucial period of development. The Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program is a voluntary, evidence-based approach that equips parents with the tools they need to be that coach. MIECHV helps parents or guardians provide care while teaching their children to succeed. We urge Congress to reauthorize the MIECHV program before it expires on September 30, 2017.

Participants in voluntary home visiting programs are typically new and expectant mothers, many of whom are single, low-income teenagers. Participants gain access to a qualified professional who provides home-based coaching during pregnancy and infancy—which includes mentoring on health and safety, child development, education, and employment goal-setting.

The benefits of evidence-based home visiting programs are as impressive as they are diverse: they include stronger families, better school outcomes, and a reduction in child abuse and neglect. For example, research shows that the Every Child Succeeds home visiting program reduced infant mortality rates by 60 percent. Another study found that the Nurse-Family Partnership program cut child abuse and neglect by 50 percent. In the Healthy Families America home visiting program, 27 percent fewer children needed special education by the time they reached elementary school.

Home visiting programs can also prepare mothers to enter or re-enter the workforce. Because teen mothers often do not finish their high school education, home visiting professionals coach parents on continuing their education and finding stable employment. An analysis of the Early Head Start home visiting program found that this resulted in a $3,600 increase in a mother's average annual earnings.

As athletes and coaches, we know that one person can make a world of difference on the path towards success. All children deserve the chance to have a fair start in life, and the MIECHV program provides them–and their parents–with that chance. **We urge you to reauthorize the MIECHV program before it expires on September 30, 2017.**

Sincerely,

Shannon Boxx
Olympic Gold Medalist
Soccer

Mary Carillo
Celebrated Sportscaster &
Former Tennis Player

Sasha Cohen
Olympic Silver Medalist
Figure Skating

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Lindsay Davenport
Former No. 1 Champion in Singles & Doubles
Tennis

Chris Evert
Winner of 18 Grand Slam Singles
Tennis

Jennie Finch
Olympic Gold Medalist
Softball

Vonetta Flowers
Olympic Gold Medalist
Bobsled

Julie Foudy
Olympic Gold Medalist
Soccer

Kym Hampton
Former Professional Basketball Player
New York Liberty, WNBA

Nancy Hogshead-Makar
Olympic Gold Medalist
Swimming

Carla Overbeck
Olympic Gold Medalist
Soccer

Summer Sanders
Olympic Gold Medalist
Swimming

Pam Shriver
Winner of 133 Titles
Tennis

Nikki Stone
Olympic Gold Medalist
Skiing

Jen Welter
First Female Coach in the NFL
Football