

MARCIA L. FUDGE  
11TH DISTRICT, OHIO

COMMITTEES:  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE  
VICE CHAIR  
SPACE AND AERONAUTICS SUBCOMMITTEE  
EDUCATION AND LABOR  
HEALTH EMPLOYMENT LABOR AND PENSIONS (HELP)  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
HIGHER EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING  
AND COMPETITIVENESS SUBCOMMITTEE

E-MAIL VIA WEBSITE:  
<http://lfudge.house.gov>

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
1513 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-7032  
(202) 225-1339 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
RICHMOND HIGHLAND CENTER  
4834 RICHMOND ROAD  
SUITE 150  
WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS, OH 44128  
(216) 522-4900  
(216) 522-4908 FAX

October 26, 2010

Dr. Regina Benjamin, M.D.  
Office of the Surgeon General  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 18-66  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

I am writing regarding the Health and Human Services Call to Action on Breastfeeding, currently being drafted by your office in conjunction with the Office of Women's Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which is expected to be released later this fall.

Breast milk is the best source of infant nutrition and we must continue to educate mothers and families on the benefits of breast milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and up to one year if possible. For infants who are not breastfed, the AAP recommends iron fortified infant formula as the only safe alternative.

I applaud your office's efforts to further increase breastfeeding rates. I urge you to ensure that the recommendations issued by your office are sensitive to mothers who choose not to breastfeed or encounter challenges with breastfeeding.

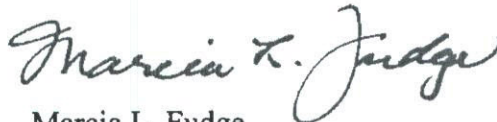
According to the recent CDC National Immunization Survey, breastfeeding rates in the U.S. are at or near record highs with 75% of women initiating breastfeeding and 43% breastfeeding at six months. However, the survey highlighted many racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in breastfeeding rates. The survey identified mothers who are younger, single, or are in low income families as less likely to breastfeed.

Many of these women are struggling financially and lack the family support structure to exclusively breastfeed. When educating mothers on the benefits of breastfeeding it is important to highlight that if breastfeeding becomes unsustainable, there are other viable options available.

The ultimate goal of the Call to Action should be to improve the nutritional well being of all infants in this nation. It is my hope that the policies put forth by your office are balanced and supportive of all mothers and care givers.

I appreciate your consideration of these comments as you finalize the Call to Action initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia L. Fudge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "F" and "J".

Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress