May 8, 2007

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the undersigned members of the Catholic Coalition for Children and a Safe Environment, we write to express our support for an appropriation of $110.9 million in new FY2008 funding for the National Children’s Study within the National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director.

As you know, the National Children’s Study will provide critical information about environmental links to diseases affecting children from before birth into adulthood, including such chronic conditions as asthma, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and learning and other developmental disabilities. We applaud the Senate and House Appropriations Committees for expressing their support for the continuation of the National Children’s Study in the FY2007 Joint Funding Resolution.

As Catholics, we are called to participate in sustaining God’s creation by caring for our children and their physical environment. A mother’s womb is a child’s first environment; yet from conception, unborn children face a disproportionate threat to their development from exposures to toxins about which we know very little. Without information about how we can protect children, born and unborn, from environmental hazards, the future of our children and their ability to fulfill their God-given potential will continue to be undermined.
We understand the challenges you face given limited federal resources. We appreciate your leadership in seeking to improve the health of future generations of Americans, particularly in the early and most critical stages of their development.

Sincerely,

Most Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn
Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Rev. Larry Snyder
President of Catholic Charities USA

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO
Catholic Health Association of the United States

Kevin E. Lofton, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Health Initiatives

Shelly Schlenker
Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy
Catholic Healthcare West
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Jerald D. Freewalt
Chair, National Catholic Partnership on Disability

Brother David G. Andrews, CSC
Executive Director
National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Ms. Sheila McCarron
Executive Director
National Council of Catholic Women

cc: Senate Committee on Appropriations
May 8, 2007

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC  20510

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