Dear Senate and House Leaders:

We write to urge you to extend funding for the broadly supported Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program at its current annual funding level of $400 million as one of the first acts of the 114th Congress before MIECHV program funding expires in March 2015.

Nearly half of the 500,000 Californians born each year will grow up in a poor or low-income household, and the ways in which economic hardship negatively influences children’s health and learning are well-documented. However, extensive research also shows that voluntary home visiting programs effectively support vulnerable families and positively influence both parent and child outcomes. In fact, the benefits of such programs far outweigh the costs, with savings up to $5.70 per dollar invested in the form of increased family economic self-sufficiency and reduced health, education, and child welfare system costs.

The critical resources provided by MIECHV enabled the California Department of Public Health to create the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP) in 2010. CHVP built upon established local home visiting programs funded by other sources, including county First 5 commissions and local governments. Through CHVP, 21 counties offer home visiting services using the nationally-recognized Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families America models. To date, CHVP has reached 2,000 children and their parents, and established important connections between state and local efforts to serve vulnerable families.

California, like many states, faces unacceptable rates of poor birth outcomes, child abuse and neglect, developmental delays, and impaired maternal and child health. Need for home visiting programs in our state remains great, and MIECHV resources are essential to meeting this need. We applaud the flexibility of the MIECHV program in allowing states to choose the home visiting programs and approaches that best fit their systems, while emphasizing accountability to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

We urge you to include an extension of the MIECHV program at its current funding level among legislation that must pass March 2015 in the 114th Congress.

Sincerely,

Assemblymember Kevin Mullin

Senator Richard Pan
Assemblymember Bonilla

Assemblymember Burke

Assemblymember Chiu

Assemblymember Cooley

Assemblymember Gonzalez

Assemblymember Gordon

Assemblymember Maienschein

Assemblymember Rodriguez

Assemblymember Steinorth

Assemblymember Stone

Assemblymember Wood

Assemblymember Cooper

Assemblymember Chau