

**CSIS/HTHH**  
**The Mother & Child Project Book Launch**  
**March 24, 2015**  
**3:30-5:00pmET**

3:45-4:00pm

**Keynote Address: William H. Frist, MD, Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Hope Through Healing Hands**

- Thank you Renee, Thank you Steve. It's always so great to be back in DC. I've been working with CSIS now for almost twenty years, and it's the best. In fact, I'm honored to be on their Board of Trustees for the past eight years.
- I was excited to hear that both Rep. Diane Black and Renee Ellmers were able to travel to Guatemala with CARE in February. There really isn't any substitute to see for yourself, in person, how our U.S. tax dollars are put to work with USAID. Our dollars, your dollars, really do reach far corners of the globe in the most remote of villages to families with lives we can barely imagine – but they are receiving maternal, newborn, and child health care in terms of education and services for prenatal and postnatal care, nutrition, vaccines, and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. This is good news. Lives are being saved.
- We are excited about their leadership as champions for this issue among their peers in Congress.
- As a former legislator, I applaud their leadership knowing that even though the issues we are here to discuss today: maternal, newborn, and child health and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, represent a fraction of 1% of the U.S. budget, these dollars affect thousands, even millions, of lives. This is the great bipartisan work we have the privilege as legislators to participate in.

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- Why now? Why these issues of maternal, newborn, and child health? For the last 7 years or so, I've had the privilege to sit on the Board of Trustees for Save the Children. I served as the Co-Chair of their Newborn and Child Survival Campaign. In that capacity, we have been championing the issues of maternal, newborn, and child health now as maybe the next big critical issue for global health, for years.
- With this background, we were excited to work with with Melinda Gates and others to lead on this often overlooked issues of healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, especially among conservatives, as a critical nexus of global health issues.
- For about 18 months, Hope Through Healing Hands has been leading the *Faith-Based Coalition for Healthy Mothers and Children Worldwide* with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- This coalition is a growing group of people of faith who are artists, authors,

athletes, and academics. Pastors, church leaders, and nonprofit leaders have all come together to lend their voices to promote awareness and advocacy for maternal, newborn, and child health with a special emphasis on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies.

- We know that if we can address healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies in a systemic and sustainable way, we can also achieve many other global health goals such as combatting extreme poverty, promoting gender equality, keeping children in schools, keeping young women in schools to graduate secondary or even college level education, improving maternal and child health, and prevention of transmission of HIV from mother to child.
- When we talk about healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (or HTSP), we are talking about access to voluntary family planning, put simply. When we talk about voluntary family planning in the international context, we mean enabling women and couples to determine the number of pregnancies and their timing, and equipping women to use voluntary methods for preventing pregnancy, not including abortion, that are harmonious with their values and beliefs.
- To unpack this message, to change the rhetoric, and to rethink the importance of family planning or healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, we knew we needed strong messaging with voices from across the spectrum—from more conservative to more progressive—united on this issue. But how to do that?
- This is what *The Mother & Child Project: Raising Our Voices for Health and Hope* is all about. We asked 47 authors to contribute their voice for awareness and advocacy for healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. This compendium of essays and articles range from personal stories and poetry from artists to weightier policy pieces from academics. We have political op-eds and essays that get at the intersection of HTSP and modern day slavery, orphanhood, and gender inequities. And, with our leadership in the faith-based community, there is a whole section dedicated to why people of faith should care about these fundamental global health issues.
- Most importantly, this book reveals the stories from the women themselves of how healthy timing and spacing has deeply influenced, or perhaps saved, their lives and the lives of their children. Women from Kenya, India, Burundi, Ethiopia, and other developing nations share their stories for the first time.
- These stories bring faces to the statistics.
- Over 289,000 women in developing nations die from preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Sadly over 80 percent of these deaths are preventable. Skilled care during labor, delivery and up to 48 hours postpartum makes a lifesaving difference.
- When girls are married in their early teen years and immediately pressured to become pregnant, there are serious health risks to both mother and any child she bears at such a young age. And when mothers in nations with poor nutrition and health systems become pregnant too soon (less than 2.5 years)

after their previous birth, the health impact on both mother and child can be devastating.

- The Mother & Child Project seeks to spread the word, educating grassroots and grassroots alike on the powerful intervention of healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. And we are excited that many of the contributors are here today to join us to discuss this more in depth.

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- Today we celebrate the launch of this important book, but we do so here, in Washington DC, at the Capitol because we want Americans and their legislators to seize the opportunity to protect and even increase funding in these key areas of maternal and child health and international family planning in recognition of long-term national and global benefits.
- Since 2002, we have helped to save the lives of over 14 million people around the world with access to anti-retroviral medication for HIV and AIDS through PEPFAR and the Global Fund. Over 220 million women around the world say that they want to avoid their next pregnancy but they lack access to education and resources to do so. Today, let's "raise our voices for health and hope" on behalf of these 220 million women and let our nation's legislators know that we want to invest in their lives and the lives of their children.
- With the launch of this book, this is a real moment for important leadership.
- Thank you.