

# MEET GARRETT:

## WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH DEMOCRACY

On New Year's Eve 2015, Garrett Wilkinson answered a call from an unknown number. The voice on the other end introduced himself as Jerry Moran.

Garrett, a 20-year-old sophomore at Kansas State University, was stunned.

"The same Jerry Moran who is my U.S. senator?" he wondered.

Indeed it was. Sen. Moran was calling to thank Garrett for writing an op-ed on the Reach Act for a local newspaper. A few days earlier, Garrett had handed the senator a paper copy of the article (with his phone number written on top) at a town hall meeting in Haven, Kansas.

"Senator Moran said it really touched him to see young people come out in support of this, because we weren't asking for anything that pertained to ourselves. It was about helping others," Garrett recalled.

The Reach Every Mother and Child Act of 2015, legislation that RESULTS helped to craft, will ensure the U.S. does its part to help end preventable maternal and child deaths in low-income countries. It will also enshrine important reforms into law that will make USAID, our main development agency, more effective and efficient.

Moran signed on to the Reach Act a few weeks after his phone conversation with Garrett. Kansas' other senator, Pat Roberts, also attached his name in support.

"Kansas was the first state to have two Republican senators on the Reach Act," Garrett said proudly.

Hundreds of RESULTS volunteers all over the country were working alongside Garrett to push Congress to take up the Reach Act. By the end of 2015, dozens and dozens of members of Congress from both parties and every corner of the country had added their names to the bill, with the list growing by the week.

As a 2015 RESULTS REAL Change Fellow, Garrett was part of a year-long advocacy intensive for young leaders. He said the experience showed him "what you can do with democracy."

"A 20-year-old pre-med student can write an op-ed and get a call from his senator, which has the possibility of leading to a vote on a bill that can help save the lives of 15 million children by the year 2020," he said. "That's astounding."

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Garrett started a RESULTS group on his campus in fall 2015 with his friend Daniel, also a REAL Change Fellow. They decided their group would tackle both domestic and global issues, and have so far delivered 80 handwritten letters to members of Congress.

He said the phone call from Moran was serendipitous in more ways than one. Not only did Moran end up signing on to the Reach Act, but Garrett now is able to use that story to inspire others. *(continued on page 15)*



“A lot of college students don’t know the difference between representatives and senators, or even their names. And it’s hard to get them to write a letter about something they don’t know much about. But telling them stories like this is really powerful,” he said.

Garrett’s interest in global poverty stems back to his teens, when his high school established a cross-cultural partnership with a school in Nepal. He launched a project to fundraise for clean water filters for the community surrounding the school.

He said his experience in Nepal was invaluable, but only drove home the importance of advocacy in creating positive global change.

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He said that as far as he’s concerned, everyone who cares about poverty and global health should get involved with RESULTS.

“If everyone who cared about these issues took a little time to write a letter and make a phone call, I think we wouldn’t need to complain so much about what’s happening in Congress.”

## A LEGACY ON CHILD HEALTH:

Child survival and access to health services for all is a cause that RESULTS volunteers have been working on since the organization’s inception 35 years ago. Thanks in no small part to their tireless advocacy, preventable child deaths have gone down by more than half.

The RESULTS and ACTION family kicked off 2015 with a historic win on child survival, helping secure over **\$7.5 billion** from world leaders to fund **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**, supporting countries to vaccinate children against some of the world’s leading killers. Almost **half** of the **\$7.5 billion** global total came from ACTION partner countries.

Despite this great progress, **11 children under five still die every minute** — most from preventable and treatable causes like diarrhea and pneumonia. That’s where the Reach Act comes in. By focusing on those who are hardest to reach, scaling up what’s proven to work, building local capacity, and stretching every dollar further, the Reach Act will help pave the way for the end of these deaths by the year 2035. RESULTS advocates won’t stop until that goal is a reality.