

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 15 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As Congress continues to negotiate legislative packages to invest in infrastructure and improve our nation's health system, we urge you to provide at least \$30 billion in funding to prevent and prepare for future pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that underinvesting in our public health infrastructure, our biomedical research pipeline, and our medical supply chain has disastrous consequences. A robust investment in pandemic prevention and our underlying public health system is critical as the country continues to recover from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on communities across the country and devastated the economy. Since the pandemic began, over 33 million Americans have been infected with the virus and over 605,000 have died.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the rapid development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines, the United States has seen a dramatic drop in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths over the course of 2021.<sup>2</sup> But the pandemic is not yet over. Though roughly 67 percent of American adults have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, millions of

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times, "Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count," accessed July 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

people remain unvaccinated,<sup>3</sup> contributing to a concerning rise in cases and deaths as the highly contagious delta variant spreads through the population.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the pandemic, people of color have been more likely to contract and die from COVID-19, and health inequity persists in our vaccination efforts.<sup>5</sup> Recent data show that “Black and Hispanic people have had persistently lower rates of vaccination compared to their White counterparts across most states.”<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the Director of the World Health Organization has described the lack of global access to vaccines as a state of “vaccine apartheid,” contributing to preventable infections and deaths around the world.<sup>7</sup> To date, the global COVID-19 death toll has surpassed 4 million people.<sup>8</sup>

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States systemically underinvested in its public health infrastructure. In 2018, public health spending accounted for less than 3 percent of all health spending in the United States, and in the past ten years, roughly 56,000 public health jobs have disappeared due to lack of funding.<sup>9</sup> These are positions that cannot be sustained with short-term COVID-19 response funding. Meanwhile, the U.S. has failed to adequately fund global health security efforts: in 2019, pandemic preparedness funding accounted for less than 1 percent of U.S. global health development assistance.<sup>10</sup> Though Congress has provided significant emergency funding for public and global health in the past year, sustained, consistent funding will be necessary to truly prevent and mitigate future pandemics—which scientists believe will become more frequent in years to come.<sup>11</sup>

Recognizing the need for significant investments, President Biden’s American Jobs Plan called for a \$30 billion investment over 4 years to “protect Americans from future pandemics.”<sup>12</sup> Specifically, the proposal would “create U.S. jobs and prevent the severe job losses caused by pandemics through major new investments in medical countermeasures manufacturing; research and development; and related biopreparedness and biosecurity”—including funding to revamp

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<sup>3</sup> New York Times, “See How Vaccinations Are Going in Your County and State,” accessed July 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/covid-19-vaccine-doses.html>.

<sup>4</sup> The Guardian, “99.2% of US Covid deaths in June were unvaccinated, says Fauci,” July 8, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jul/08/fears-of-new-us-covid-surge-as-delta-spreads-and-many-remain-unvaccinated>.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Risk for COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death by Race/Ethnicity,” updated June 17, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, “Latest Data on COVID-19 Vaccinations by Race/Ethnicity,” July 8, 2021, <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-race-ethnicity/>.

<sup>7</sup> Reuters, “World has entered stage of ‘vaccine apartheid’ - WHO head,” May 17, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/world-has-entered-stage-vaccine-apartheid-who-head-2021-05-17/>.

<sup>8</sup> New York Times, “The world’s known Covid death toll passes four million,” Daniel E. Slotnik, July 8, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/08/world/covid-death-toll-four-million.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Trust for America’s Health, “The Impact of Chronic Underfunding on America’s Public Health System: Trends, Risks, and Recommendations, 2020,” April 2020, <https://www.tfah.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TFAH2020PublicHealthFunding.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Center for Global Development, “Rebuilding US Global Health Leadership for Impact and Shared Security,” Amanda Glassman, Janeen Madan Keller, and Rachel Silverman, December 3, 2020, <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/rebuilding-us-global-health-leadership-impact-and-shared-security>.

<sup>11</sup> Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, “5 reasons why pandemics like COVID-19 are becoming more likely,” April 28, 2020, <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/5-reasons-why-pandemics-like-covid-19-are-becoming-more-likely>.


<sup>12</sup> The White House, “FACT SHEET: The American Jobs Plan,” March 31, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/>.

the Strategic National Stockpile, accelerate the development of vaccines and therapeutics, and invest in domestic drug development.<sup>13</sup> We strongly support including this \$30 billion investment in upcoming legislative packages. Specifically, we encourage you to develop policies that bolster our public health workforce, reduce systemic inequities in health outcomes, invest in our biomedical research pipeline, expand disease surveillance capacity, and strengthen our supply chains.

Legislative proposals already exist that negotiators could pull from to achieve these goals. For example, the *Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act* would provide critical and sustained investments in public health workforce and infrastructure through \$4.5 billion in annual funding. The *Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Defense and Enhancement Act* calls for the investment of \$5 billion over 5 years in the domestic production of pharmaceutical products and advanced pharmaceutical ingredients, which would create jobs and improve supply chain safety. The *Anti-Racism in Public Health Act* would expand research on how systemic racism affects health outcomes, and the *Improving Social Determinants of Health Act* would coordinate activities pertaining to social determinants of health at the CDC and award grants to build local capacity to address these upstream factors. The *Public Health Funding Prevents Pandemics Act* would provide long overdue investment in the Prevention and Public Health Fund, bringing the authorized level of funding up to \$2 billion per fiscal year and supporting critical public health efforts like the Section 317 Immunization Fund. Meanwhile, legislation has been proposed to establish a bipartisan commission to examine the country’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and proposals exist to improve inter-agency coordination to respond to zoonotic disease outbreaks in animals and humans. Pandemic prevention funding included in these future packages must include strong taxpayer protections that ensure the American people—not large corporations—benefit from these new investments.

We look forward to working with you as our nation continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.


Sincerely,



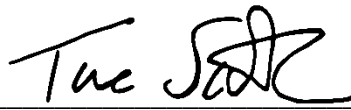
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator

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<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

*Edward J. Markey*

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

*Sherrod Brown*

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

*Kirsten Gillibrand*

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator