

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 201510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has demonstrated that threats from infectious diseases know no borders and reinforced the harsh reality that as long as this pandemic is spreading anywhere in the world, Americans are also vulnerable. As the Senate considers the next phase of emergency funding to address the threat caused by this pandemic, we write to strongly support significant U.S. investment in the international response.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 70 percent of the world remains underprepared to prevent, detect, and respond to a public health emergency. With more than 12 million cases in more than 180 countries, it is clear that no matter how successful we are at fighting COVID-19 here at home, we will never stop its spread – or prevent it from rebounding back to our shores – if we are not also fighting it around the world. U.S. global leadership in combatting COVID-19 is directly tied to protecting the health, security, and economic interests of all Americans.

COVID-19's spread also has serious national security implications for America. According to the International Rescue Committee, up to 1 billion people in the world's most fragile states are at risk of contracting COVID-19, and, according to reports from senior officials in the U.S. military, the spread of the virus could lead to a resurgence of ISIS in Syria. That is why top retired military leaders have called on Congress to “meet this challenge with the arsenal of America's global health, humanitarian, and economic toolkit. The simple truth is we can pay now or we will pay later.”

To protect American jobs and help ensure our economy can recover as quickly as possible, we also need to confront the dire humanitarian and economic consequences in emerging and developing markets. More than 50 percent of U.S. exports already went to the developing world before COVID-19 struck. As we continue to counter the global influence of countries like China, we can't risk sitting on the sidelines.

At the same time, we cannot forget that this pandemic will disproportionately impact the world's most vulnerable – undermining decades of progress. As many as half a billion people could be pushed into poverty and three dozen countries – including Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen – could experience famines in 2020, pushing an additional 130 million people to the brink of starvation.

Americans across the political spectrum overwhelmingly agree that the U.S. must lead a global response to this pandemic. Simply put, we cannot afford to ignore the international component of a comprehensive COVID-19 response if we want to be successful.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the next phase of emergency funding to address COVID-19 includes a robust, coordinated, and sufficiently resourced international response.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



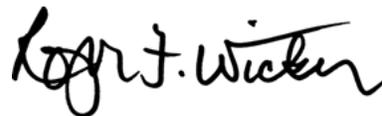
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



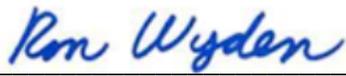
Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



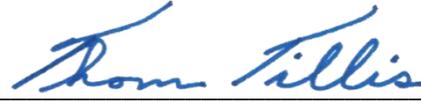
James Lankford
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed

Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

CC: Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Chairman Graham of the Senate State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee