

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 16, 2021

Chair Rosa L. DeLauro  
House Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Patrick Leahy  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Kay Granger  
House Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Vice Chairman Richard Shelby  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Leahy, and Vice Chairman Shelby:

We write to ask that you urgently direct supplemental funding **in the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations omnibus for American-led efforts to vaccinate the world**. For months, we have warned about the likelihood that new, more dangerous variants would emerge in countries with low vaccination rates. For months, we have called strenuously for a well-funded, comprehensive, American-led global vaccination and distribution program, to prevent the emergence of new variants and bring an end to this pandemic. In July, our fears were realized when the Delta variant swept across our nation, stalling our economic recovery and causing tens of thousands of avoidable deaths. Now, the world faces yet another variant, Omicron, which may be even more transmissible than the Delta variant. We must end this cycle by prioritizing getting shots in arms around the world as soon as possible, especially in low- and lower-middle-income countries, which do not have the resources to vaccinate their populations.

Even before the Delta variant was widespread in the United States, many of us led a request<sup>i</sup> for up to \$34 billion in the Build Back Better Act (BBBA) to fund global vaccination production and distribution—as **the most cost-effective strategy** to ending the COVID-19 pandemic once and for all. As we wrote in July,

No investment in the fight against COVID-19 is more urgent and cost-effective now than an investment in getting the world vaccinated as quickly as possible. Even assuming wealthy countries will be fully vaccinated by mid-2021, the global economic cost of not vaccinating lower-income countries is estimated to be \$9 trillion per year, or nearly ten percent of global GDP.

However, as of writing, the House-passed BBBA includes a mere \$1.3 billion spread across five different pandemic-related priorities, one of which is “*expanded vaccine production capacity*.”

We were encouraged<sup>ii</sup> by the administration’s recent announcement of efforts to jumpstart further domestic vaccine production using remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan, but we believe **the pace and scale of these efforts remain out of sync with the magnitude of the threat that an unvaccinated world poses to American lives, the American economy, and America’s global leadership**. While the expansion of vaccine production capacity is expected to deliver dividends over the coming months, experts have flagged that delivery of vaccines and treatment in low- and lower-middle-income countries remain enduring challenges. Additional aid for testing, therapeutics, PPE, ventilators, cold chain capacity, and availability of healthcare workers will save lives around the world and protect America from the next variant. **Therefore, we strongly urge the inclusion of no less than \$17 billion in the FY22 appropriations omnibus for global vaccination, testing, and treatment of COVID-19.**

Finally, we reiterate that **focusing exclusively on *domestic* testing, vaccines, and boosters is insufficient to protect us from the virus.** The President’s recent proposals to increase U.S. vaccination rates and expand the availability of at-home rapid tests to counter the Omicron variant are welcome, but a comprehensive strategy to protect America from the Omicron variant *must* include global vaccination, testing, and treatment efforts. The time to act was a year ago. We cannot afford to waste another moment and risk the emergence of yet another, even more dangerous variant. It is long past time to end this pandemic.

Respectfully,



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
U.S. Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
U.S. Senator



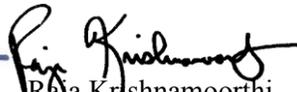
Edward J. Markey  
U.S. Senator



Tina Smith  
U.S. Senator



Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

*U.S. Senators:*

Bernard Sanders  
Sherrod Brown

Chris Van Hollen  
Tammy Baldwin

Brian Schatz

*Members of the U.S. House of Representatives:*

James P. McGovern  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
David N. Cicilline  
Mark Takano  
William R. Keating  
James R. Langevin  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Ted Deutch  
Albio Sires  
Ro Khanna  
Lloyd Doggett  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Sara Jacobs  
Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Marie Newman  
Peter Welch  
Dean Phillips  
Jim Costa  
J. Luis Correa  
Sean Casten  
Mark DeSaulnier

Jerrold Nadler  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Jamie Raskin  
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
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Mondaire Jones  
Ted W. Lieu  
Andy Kim  
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Adam Smith  
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Colin Allred  
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Madeleine Dean  
Carolyn Bourdeaux  
Salud Carbajal  
Conor Lamb  
Jimmy Panetta  
Dina Titus

CC:

Administrator Samantha Power, United States Agency for International Development  
Secretary Antony Blinken, United States Department of State  
Secretary Xavier Becerra, United States Department of Health and Human Services  
Coordinator Jeff Zients, White House COVID Response Team

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<sup>i</sup> *REPRESENTATIVES MALINOWSKI, KRISHNAMOORTHY, JAYAPAL, AND SENATORS MERKLEY AND WARREN LEAD 70 COLLEAGUES IN PUSH FOR INCREASED FUNDING FOR GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 VACCINE*, Press Release (July 23, 2021).

<sup>ii</sup> *CO-CHAIRS OF THE COVID-19 GLOBAL VACCINATION CAUCUS WELCOME ADMINISTRATION'S PLANS TO EXPAND VACCINE PRODUCTION CAPACITY*, Press Release (November 18, 2021)