President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500  

Dear Mr. President,

The U.S. government’s haphazard, uncoordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the importance of a central body to set policies and coordinate the response. We ask you that take a long-term, strategic approach to protecting America from this current crisis and future pandemics by reinstating the National Security Council’s (NSC) Global Health Security Directorate (GHSD) as a separate entity from the Counterproliferation and Biodefense Directorate (CBD). We ask the GHSD be adequately resourced and staffed by career public health officers from across the U.S. Government with a clear mandate to focus on pandemic preparedness policy and response, to provide a critical link between the health and intelligence communities.

A reinstated GHSD would enable NSC coordination to complement the health security work occurring throughout the United States. By marshaling the convening power of the White House, the GHSD could provide enhanced early warning and understanding of developing threats, based on intelligence of emerging pandemics, foreign government responses, and infection and death rates. Had the GHSD been adequately resourced and empowered prior to the ongoing pandemic, it would have been able to draw from its experience providing strategic coordination and guidance during Ebola in 2014 and Zika in 2016 to help combat Coronavirus. On 11 March 2020, Dr. Anthony Fauci told Congress about the GHSD, “We worked very well with that office. It would be nice if the office was still there.”

Health and intelligence experts warn that the U.S. remains vulnerable to pandemics and contagious disease. According to the Intelligence Community’s 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment, “…the United States and the world will remain vulnerable to the next flu pandemic or large-scale outbreak of a contagious disease that could lead to massive rates of death and disability, severely affect the world economy, strain international resources, and increase calls on the United States for Support.” On 12 May 2020 Director of the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci told the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, "And even if we get better control over the next several months, it's likely there will be the virus somewhere on this planet that will eventually get back to us.” Bill Gates warns that a Coronavirus-like virus will probably happen, “every 20 years or so.”

The United States has the best scientists in the world. However, these scientists work for a host of different agencies, universities, and private organizations, none of which can singularly combat a pandemic. To meet this need, we strongly urge you to reinstate the GHSD as a separate
entity from the CBD. An effective response requires unified action, led by a strategic coordinating body, that can leverage the vast expertise and tools available in the United States arsenal. We strongly urge you to reinstate the NSC’s GHSD as a separate entity from the CBD to permanently serve as a strategic coordinator with a mandate to focus on pandemic preparedness policy and response.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

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