

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write to request robust funding for the international response to COVID-19 be included in the next phase of emergency funding. As we were harshly reminded when this pandemic rapidly spread from Wuhan to Washington, infectious disease threats know no borders; as long as the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading anywhere in the world, Americans everywhere are at risk.

U.S. global leadership in combating COVID-19 is directly tied to protecting the health, security, and economic interests of all Americans. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 70% of the world today remains underprepared to prevent, detect, and respond to a public health emergency. With over 10 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in more than 180 countries, no matter how successful we are in fighting COVID-19 at home, we will never fully stop its spread – or prevent it from rebounding back to our shores – if we are not also fighting it around the world.

We also have an economic imperative to fight this disease globally. More than 50% of U.S. exports are sold to the developing world, which means a shutdown of their economies will directly impact our own economy. To protect American jobs and help ensure a swift economic recovery, we need to confront the dire economic and humanitarian consequences of this disease in emerging and developing markets. As we continue to compete with countries like China for global influence, we cannot risk sitting on the sidelines.

At the same time, we cannot forget that this pandemic will disproportionately impact the world's most vulnerable – including women and girls – undermining decades of progress. As many as half a billion people could be pushed into poverty and three dozen countries 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 threat, with 79% of voters supportive of funding the State Department, USAID and our other development agencies to limit its spread around the world.¹ We cannot afford to under-resource global foreign assistance as it is an essential component of a comprehensive COVID-19 response.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent 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,



Lois Frankel
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Francis Rooney
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

¹ U.S. Global Leadership Coalition / Morning Consult Survey, April 2020: <https://www.usglc.org/newsroom/voters-overwhelmingly-see-u-s-international-assistance-as-key-to-defeating-covid-19/>

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Cc: The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chair, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, House Appropriations Subcommittee