

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 7, 2020

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

We write to express concern regarding the Trump Administration's previous attempts to cut funding for infectious disease and pandemic preparedness and response and to urge you to fully fund such efforts in your fiscal year 2021 proposed budget, as the world addresses the current outbreak of novel Coronavirus. As of today, the virus has infected over 28,000 individuals, causing over 500 fatalities across the globe.¹ Here in the United States, the total number of infections has increased to 12 individuals in six states, including two human-to-human transmissions. It is vital that the federal government has the resources available to respond to this growing threat and protect the American people.

The Trump Administration has repeatedly proposed budget cuts to the offices that spearhead emerging infectious disease and pandemic preparedness and response. The President's fiscal year 2020 budget would have cut over \$4.5 billion to select offices that combat pandemics, a reduction of nearly 20% from fiscal year 2019 levels.² Such reductions, if proposed in the upcoming fiscal year 2021 budget and enacted, would severely limit the federal government's capacity to respond to emerging viral and biological threats, as well as to contain and minimize the spread of the current novel Coronavirus outbreak. Just last week, the Department of Health and Human Services notified Congress that it may need to reallocate over \$136 million to be able to continue response efforts to the novel Coronavirus, indicating the current response demands additional resources.³

¹ National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, *Feb 6: Daily briefing on novel coronavirus cases in China* (Feb. 6, 2020). See also Department of Homeland Security, *Update on DHS Efforts Related to the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Outbreak* (Feb. 6, 2020).

² The FY2019 enacted funding level for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global Health programs, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, and the Infectious Diseases Rapid Response Reserve Fund totaled \$23.594 billion. The Trump Administration's requested FY2020 budget for these same programs was \$19.091 billion.

³ *HHS notifies Congress that it may tap millions of additional dollars for coronavirus response*, The Washington Post (Feb. 3, 2020) (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/02/03/hhs-notifies-congress-it-may-tap-millions-additional-dollars-coronavirus-response/>).

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney

February 7, 2020

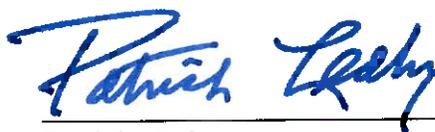
Page 2

As we have learned from past public health crises such as the Ebola, SARS, and H1N1 outbreaks, pandemics require an aggressive, coordinated response across the federal government. In light of the current novel Coronavirus outbreak and the persistent threat of global pandemics, we urge you to fully fund infectious disease and pandemic preparedness and response efforts in your fiscal year 2021 proposed budget. A failure to do so would not only be a danger to the health and welfare of all Americans, but also a threat to our national security.

Sincerely,



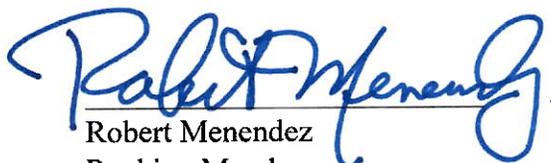
Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations



Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions



Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations