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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

DAVID M. WEINBERG, STAFF DIRECTOR  
PAMELA THIESSEN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
LAURA W. KILBRIDE, CHIEF CLERK

March 9, 2021

The Honorable David S. Ferriero  
Archivist of the United States  
U.S. National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-60001

Dear Mr. Ferriero:

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is investigating the federal government's response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Senator Peters previously notified federal departments and agencies on November 18, 2020 to preserve all documents and communications, including regarding the government's COVID-19 response. The National Archives and Records Administration was included in these notifications. In addition, on December 21, 2020, Senator Peters sent Vice President Pence a request for documents and information related to the White House Coronavirus Task Force response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand these documents and communications are now held by the National Archives and Records Administration.

The United States remains in the midst of a national and public health security crisis. More than a half million Americans have died from COVID-19 since the first cases were detected in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office found that “[a]s of December 2020, there were more than 10.7 million unemployed individuals, compared to nearly 5.8 million individuals at the beginning of the calendar year,” and further warned the “pandemic will likely remain a significant obstacle to more robust economic activity.”<sup>2</sup> The federal government's response has a decisive impact on efforts to save lives, restore the economy, and overcome the pandemic.

These deaths are unacceptable. The economic fallout must also be remedied. As such, we must examine and understand the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and any needed reforms to combat this and future pandemics. This includes understanding decisions regarding testing, distribution of medical supplies, and communications with the public, as well as answering questions surrounding public health, military, and intelligence warnings about the pandemic and potential political interference with scientific guidance. The Committee is authorized by Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate to investigate “the efficiency and

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *United States COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by State* ([https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases\\_casesper100klast7days](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days)).

<sup>2</sup> Government Accountability Office, *COVID-19: Critical Vaccine Distribution, Supply Chain, Program Integrity, and Other Challenges Require Focused Federal Attention* (GAO-21-265) (January 28, 2021).

economy of operations of all branches of the Government.” To that end, please provide the following documents and communications as soon as possible, but no later than March 29, 2021:

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to the shifts in leadership and authority including but not limited to communications with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or the Department of Defense, and all documents and communications referring or relating to how the roles of each department and agency evolved in relation to the White House Coronavirus Task Force and overall federal COVID-19 response.
2. All documents and communications referring or relating to former President Trump’s March 11, 2020, National Emergency Declaration, including but not limited to:
  - a. Factors leading to the President’s determination to make the declarations on March 11, 2020;
  - b. What other authorities, including under the Stafford Act, were considered and the basis for whether to utilize other authorities;
  - c. What factors determined which programs would be activated under the subsequent major disaster declarations? Were other programs considered outside of Category B and Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training program; and
  - d. What, if any, changes in leadership and authority occurred after the President declared a national emergency.
3. All documents and communications referring or relating to the establishment of Community Based Testing Sites for COVID-19, including FEMA’s or HHS’s respective roles and responsibilities, how testing site locations were decided, and the funding structure for testing sites.
4. All documents and communications referring or relating to social distancing and other containment measures with respect to federal response planning starting in February 2020, including the CDC’s guidance regarding the decisions to allow large gatherings to take place, the initial decision to not recommend wearing masks in public, and the CDC’s involvement in the “Coronavirus Guidelines for America – 15 Days to Slow the Spread” campaign, including but not limited to the data and assessments relied upon.
5. All White House Coronavirus Task Force organizational charts referring or relating to the COVID-19 response, including any employees or officials involved in supporting the efforts of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, as well as former Defense Production Act Task Force members.
6. All documents and communications referring or relating to intelligence briefings, National Security Council (NSC) intelligence reports, and proposed recommendations relating to the federal government’s COVID-19 response, including but not limited to:
  - a. NSC 2018 Pandemic Playbook and drafts;
  - b. NSC pandemic modeling reports and projections;
  - c. Briefing by CDC Director Redfield on or around January 2, 2020;
  - d. January 14, 2020, Policy Coordination Committee Meeting; and

- e. February 14, 2020 memoranda titled, “U.S. Government Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus.”
7. All documents and communications referring or relating to the Crimson Contagion tabletop exercise and the February 21, 2020 tabletop simulation of a flu-like pandemic exercise presented by HHS Assistant Secretary Kadlec.
8. All White House Coronavirus Task Force member communications with officials at other agencies and with the World Health Organization relating to the COVID-19 response.
9. All documents and communications referring or relating to White House Coronavirus Task Force meeting and call agendas, including standing calls with Governors and press briefings.
10. All weekly White House Task Force reports for Governors.
11. All documents and communications referring or relating to the use of the Defense Production Act; the acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE); halting the export of critical medical supplies (testing and PPE); COVID-19 briefings; guidance documents; testing; communications with the public; a national education campaign for COVID-19, and the development of diagnostic or serology tests, therapeutics, and vaccines, including but not limited to all forecasts, modeling, and memos of the White House Coronavirus Task Force.
12. All documents and communications referring or relating to White House reports and guidance relating to COVID-19, including but not limited to the Coronavirus Task Force, Office of Science and Technology, and “Coronavirus Guidelines for America – 15 Days to Slow the Spread.”
13. All documents and communications referring or relating to the World Health Organization’s COVID-19 response, funding for projects affiliated with the World Health Organization, and the decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization.
14. All documents and communications referring or relating to requests by and information provided to the transition team.

*Strategic National Stockpile and Personal Protective Equipment*

15. All documents and communications referring or relating to the Administration’s decisions to invoke its authorities under the Defense Production Act to mobilize and increase PPE production.
16. All documents and communications referring or relating to Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force determination of PPE distribution to states and a list of all individuals involved.

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17. All documents and communications referring or relating to the shipment of PPE or ventilators by the federal government to other countries, including NSC guidance to USAID.
18. All documents and communications referring or relating to Project Air Bridge, including but not limited to records of supply requests, supplies shipped, and the "VIP list" of providers.
19. All contracts or agreements either entered into or directing FEMA, DOD, the Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force, Project Air Bridge, or the Joint Acquisition Task Force to enter into contracts for medical supplies, PPE, and ventilators.

*COVID-19 Testing*

20. All documents and communications referring or relating to national testing and contact tracing strategies, including but not limited to how the White House Coronavirus Task Force made the decision to let states handle COVID-19 testing.
21. All documents and communications referring or relating to the planning and implementation of National Testing Centers.

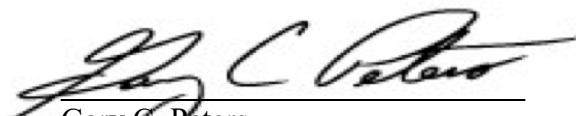
*Vaccines*

22. All documents and communications referring or relating to vaccine rollout strategies in response to a national pandemic, including COVID-19.

Please refer to the attached Schedule A for information on how to respond to this request and for the types of documents and communications to be provided. Unless otherwise indicated, all documents and communications responsive to these requests should be provided from January 2019 to present.

Thank you for your prompt attention and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters  
Chairman



Rob Portman  
Ranking Member