

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
“The Federal Interagency Response to the Coronavirus and Preparing for  
Future Global Pandemics”**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS**

**March 5, 2020**

**AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us today.

The top priority of this committee, and of your agencies, is very simple: keeping Americans safe. To be clear, this Coronavirus outbreak in the United States is not currently widespread, but it does pose a grave threat to our public health and our homeland security and must be taken seriously.

I am grateful for the efforts of your agencies and public health officials across the country to limit the spread of this contagious virus.

While we have seen a growing number of cases in the United States, we have thankfully not yet seen a widespread outbreak in our country.

It is the job of this Administration to work with Congress and our state and local governments to do everything we can to limit the spread of this virus. We must go above and beyond to prepare for the less likely, but worst case scenario, of more widespread infections.

Accessing clear information about Coronavirus has been a significant challenge for the public. The American people have a lot of questions. They want accurate, reliable information about this virus’s spread and what the government is doing to protect their health and safety.

As we have learned from past pandemics, outbreaks like this require an aggressive, coordinated and comprehensive response as well as timely, trusted, and useful guidance from public health and security officials.

In the coming weeks and months, your agencies will play a crucial role in containing the outbreak, educating Americans about the virus, and protecting public health.

Whether your response is timely and effective will truly be a matter of life and death. With that in mind, I appreciate you joining us today to give my constituents in Michigan and the American people clear answers to the pressing questions they have about this virus.

I look forward to hearing about what steps your departments are taking to ensure that we have the right plans and resources in place to limit the spread of this highly contagious virus and keep Americans safe.