

August 6, 2021

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Biden,

On April 13, we and many other civil society organizations wrote to you asking for your leadership to launch an ambitious vaccine manufacturing program to help the world produce billions more doses within approximately one year and end the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Since then, more than 1.2 million additional people have died because they could not get access to vaccines, bringing the total death toll due to COVID-19 to 4.27 million lives lost.

Now, 116 members of Congress, led by Representatives Krishnamoorthi, Malinowski and Jayapal and Senators Merkley and Warren, and including more than half the Democratic Caucus in the House of Representatives, have stood up, not only to voice their support for you to launch an ambitious vaccine manufacturing program, but to help fund it in full. We are encouraged that the aforementioned members of Congress have written to you requesting that the budget reconciliation bill provide up to \$34 billion in funding to significantly accelerate the production of COVID-19 vaccines for global distribution, both to save lives and to reinforce America's leadership in combatting the pandemic worldwide.²

They join many of the world's top scientists and scientific institutions, public health experts and religious leaders urging your administration for the past year to invest in vaccine manufacturing and establish new production hubs to meet global vaccine needs. We emphasize that since January 2021, Dr. Anthony Fauci, your Chief Medical Adviser on COVID-19, has publicly advocated that the U.S. lead in scaling global vaccine manufacturing to the levels required to achieve truly equal global access to COVID-19 vaccines.³

The artificial scarcity of vaccines is devastating low- and middle-income countries, beyond just the needless deaths and disease from COVID-19. The World Food Program estimates that 270 million people potentially face life-threatening food shortages this year — compared to 150 million before the pandemic. The number of people on the brink of famine has jumped to 41 million people currently from 34 million last year.⁴ The effects of COVID-19 on health systems are projected to increase the death toll from AIDS, TB, and malaria by millions over the coming years — a loss of life that in some settings threatens to be equivalent to the direct impact of COVID-19 itself.⁵ UNICEF says more than 600 million children

¹ <https://www.citizen.org/article/letter-from-60-groups-urging-biden-to-launch-global-manufacturing-program/>

² https://krishnamoorthi.house.gov/sites/krishnamoorthi.house.gov/files/Letter%20to%20President%20Biden%20on%20Funding%20for%20a%20Global%20Vaccination%20Campaign_0.pdf

³ <https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1349440436734226432?s=20>

⁴ https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000129022/download/?_ga=2.212633428.1908339400.1624214515-1052469607.1623686526

⁵ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(20\)30288-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(20)30288-6/fulltext)

in countries not on academic break are still affected by school closures,⁶ and the World Bank has projected a loss of 10 trillion dollars in earnings over time for this generation of students.⁷

The overall economic fallout of the uncontrolled pandemic — and the new variants emerging due to the ongoing global vaccine shortage — threaten to worsen the humanitarian catastrophe that now confronts us all, especially the most disadvantaged communities in low- and middle-income countries.

Moreover, the persistence of the uncontrolled pandemic is injuring us domestically. We are now seeing firsthand the truism that the best line of defense for the United States is for the entire world to be vaccinated. So long as the pandemic persists globally, we face the high likelihood of new, dangerous variants, any one of which may prove able to evade the protections afforded by existing vaccines. The U.S. is suffering needless, significant economic harm due to pandemic-related reduced exports. And we are losing the opportunity to demonstrate real global leadership by sharing vaccine technology and expanding vaccine production, as developing countries grow increasingly frustrated by severe disparities in vaccine access.

President Biden, you committed during the campaign to sharing vaccine technology with the rest of the world.⁸ As President, you have stated that “the U.S. will serve as a vaccine arsenal for the world.” Yet a handful of multinational drug companies continue to exert monopolistic control over the key vaccine technologies — notwithstanding key U.S. government support for the development of those technologies — and the United States has so far donated only 100 million vaccine doses. That total amounts to only one one-hundredth of the current global need. Even the somewhat larger promise of 500 million doses is far below need.

As Democrats move forward with the Build Back Better agenda, we write again urging you to seize the opportunity to launch a global vaccine manufacturing program for the world, and to support any necessary funds — in addition to any unspent COVID-19 relief funds — be set aside in the upcoming economic development and jobs package. The Nullifying Opportunities for Variants to Infect & Decimate (NOVID) Act (H.R. 3778/S.1976) details a \$34 billion plan for a comprehensive production and distribution strategy.

Already the world has lost too much time and there is no more time to waste.

Sincerely,

Public Citizen
Health GAP
Oxfam America
Partners In Health
PrEP4All
RESULTS

⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/geneva-palais-briefing-note-current-covid-19-induced-education-crisis>

⁷ https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/learning-losses-due-covid19-could-add-10-trillion?_cf_chl_jschl_tk=_pmd_441b634f4483ace9d06bef74e7ddd63c698c4423-1628284012-0-gqNtZGzNAiKjcnBszQoO

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4CloiA3vfQ>