

August 6, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer,

On April 13, we and many other civil society organizations wrote to President Biden asking for his 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.<sup>i</sup> 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 the launch of an ambitious vaccine manufacturing program, but to help fund it in full. We are encouraged that the aforementioned members of Congress have written to the president 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.<sup>ii</sup>

They join many of the world's top scientists and scientific institutions, public health experts and religious leaders urging the Biden 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, the president's 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.<sup>iii</sup>

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.<sup>iv</sup> 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.<sup>v</sup> UNICEF says more than 600 million children in countries not on academic break are still affected by school closures,<sup>vi</sup> and the World Bank has projected a loss of 10 trillion dollars in earnings over time for this generation of students.<sup>vii</sup>

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 committed during the campaign to sharing vaccine technology with the rest of the world.<sup>viii</sup> As President, he has 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 respectfully to ask Congress to provide all necessary funds in the reconciliation package — in addition to any unspent COVID-19 relief funds — in order to scale up global vaccine manufacturing and distribution and bring the COVID-19 pandemic to a rapid end. 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

cc: Senator Bernie Sanders, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Budget  
Senator Ron Wyden, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance  
Senator Patty Murray, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on HELP  
Representative John Yarmouth, Chair of the U.S. House Budget Committee  
Representative Richard Neal, Chair of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee  
Representative Frank Pallone, Chair of the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee

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

<sup>ii</sup> [https://krishnamoorthi.house.gov/sites/krishnamoorthi.house.gov/files/Letter%20to%20President%20Biden%20on%20Funding%20for%20a%20Global%20Vaccination%20Campaign\\_0.pdf](https://krishnamoorthi.house.gov/sites/krishnamoorthi.house.gov/files/Letter%20to%20President%20Biden%20on%20Funding%20for%20a%20Global%20Vaccination%20Campaign_0.pdf)

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

<sup>iv</sup> [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000129022/download/?\\_ga=2.212633428.1908339400.1624214515-1052469607.1623686526](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000129022/download/?_ga=2.212633428.1908339400.1624214515-1052469607.1623686526)

<sup>v</sup> [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)

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

<sup>vii</sup> [https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/learning-losses-due-covid19-could-add-10-trillion?\\_cf\\_chl\\_jschl\\_tk\\_\\_=pmd\\_441b634f4483ace9d06bef74e7ddd63c698c4423-1628284012-0-gqNtZGzNAiKjcnBszQoO](https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/learning-losses-due-covid19-could-add-10-trillion?_cf_chl_jschl_tk__=pmd_441b634f4483ace9d06bef74e7ddd63c698c4423-1628284012-0-gqNtZGzNAiKjcnBszQoO)

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