



1600 20th Street, NW • Washington, D.C. 20009 • 202/588-1000 • www.citizen.org

July 9, 2021

Dr. Jill Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Dr. Biden,

We understand through media reports that you are considering leading the U.S. delegation to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. We are writing to respectfully request that if you do attend, you bring with you an ambitious U.S. plan to vaccinate the world. The Olympic Games, a symbol of global unity, respect, and friendship, demand a commitment from the Biden administration to ensure global vaccine access and end the COVID-19 pandemic.

After being postponed for the first time in modern Olympic history, the Tokyo 2020 Games are proceeding despite [high opposition](#) and low vaccination rates in Japan, where only [16%](#) of people are fully vaccinated. Already, [Ugandan](#) and [Serbian](#) team members tested positive upon arrival in Japan.

Yesterday, the Japanese government [declared](#) a state of emergency and barred spectators from Olympic events in Tokyo due to a dramatic spike in cases. This surge in cases testifies to the urgent need for a U.S.-led plan to vaccinate the world; it demonstrates that vaccine inequality encourages COVID to spread and poses grave danger to all of us, especially the most vulnerable.

At the current rate at which people are dying from COVID-19, more than [1,400 people](#) worldwide will die during the four-and-a-half-hour Opening Ceremony alone.

We appreciate that as an educator, you may be particularly sensitive to the impact of this artificially protracted pandemic on young people, especially young girls. At the launch of the international TeachHer initiative in 2016, you [said](#) that “it’s our responsibility to make sure all girls are given the same opportunity to learn and grow.”

Extending the pandemic by failing to provide fast, equitable, and universal vaccination threatens that goal. The pandemic and lockdowns have forced [1.6 billion students](#) out of school, denying them access to education, nutrition, and opportunity. Close to [7 million students](#) could drop out of school permanently as a result of the pandemic, further exacerbating inequalities for girls, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups, especially in the Global South.

A plan from the Biden administration that meets the needs of this historic crisis must include:

- An urgent [global vaccine manufacturing program](#) to end the pandemic and build vaccine production infrastructure for the future. A \$25 billion investment in mRNA vaccine manufacturing around the world can produce 8 billion doses of mRNA vaccines in the next 12 months, enough to vaccinate 80% of people in low- and middle-income countries.

- Sharing technology, recipes, and know-how with the World Health Organization and making publicly available the recipe for the Moderna-NIH mRNA vaccine, which was developed with taxpayer dollars. This is a people's vaccine; it should be a global public good.

Your advocacy for young people throughout your career is admirable. We call on you to continue that mission by bringing to the Olympic Games a comprehensive plan from the Biden administration to ensure global vaccine access, end the pandemic, and safeguard the futures of young people everywhere.

Sincerely,



Rob Weissman, President
Public Citizen