



Feb. 26, 2020

Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey and Ranking Member Kay Granger,
House Committee on Appropriations

Chairman Mike Enzi and Ranking Member Bernie Sanders,
Senate Committee on the Budget

Chairman Lindsey Graham and Ranking Member Patrick Leahy,
Senate State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

As professionals who have dedicated our careers to global health, we are writing to urge you to reject the administration's latest proposed cuts to global health in the 2021 budget.

We already knew—and the coronavirus epidemic has confirmed--that the source of our next infectious epidemic may be just a plane flight away, and that America's health depends more than ever on the strength of other countries' health systems. Many low- and middle-income countries are already struggling to address deep-rooted health problems, making a new outbreak even more difficult to contain. An emergency can

push health systems—and economies—to the brink of collapse, setting off a chain of events that can threaten our own health and prosperity.

That is why we are particularly concerned with the administration's proposed \$3 billion cut from global health programs, and its plan to cut in half the U.S. contribution to the World Health Organization's annual budget. Already stretched to the breaking point, WHO is at this moment working to contain the deadly, unprecedented and unpredictable coronavirus. Plans to cut funding as a new epidemic is upon us is shortsighted and dangerous.

And, while the coronavirus is dominating our headlines and our attention, future threats are inevitable. Our global response can only be as strong as our weakest link, and American leadership is critical in supporting nations as they tackle deadly threats, some ancient, like tuberculosis, and some that have re-emerged more recently, such as Ebola.

WHO also provides critical guidance for countries to reduce the most common non-infectious killers—including cancer, heart disease, and lung disease—which cause 70% of all deaths. With too little support for governments to prevent illness and death from these noncommunicable conditions, we face a future with overburdened health systems, weakened economies, hindered global development and poorer political stability.

In contrast, when we act to strengthen public health systems around the world, we enjoy some of the greatest returns on investment of any health or health care-related dollars. Simply put, health is a critical determinant of global economic prosperity.

In addition to cuts to WHO, the administration's proposed budget cuts reduce contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as to agencies that track climate change and food security.

In your wisdom and leadership, you have rejected such cuts over the past three years, and we encourage you to reject them again.

Investing in global health is nothing less than protection of our homeland, our economy, and the health of all Americans.

Respectfully,

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