



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

April 16, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We are writing to express our support for your April 14th announcement of an administration review and hold on U.S. voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization (WHO) due to their mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Below please find additional information to help inform your due diligence related to this valuable institution.

First, we are deeply concerned with the WHO's and Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) handling of the early stages of COVID-19. The CCP's lies and WHO's poor handling of this crisis enabled a regional epidemic to become a pandemic. This resulted in countries around the world, including ours, fighting the virus with incomplete information and valuable time wasted. Sadly, as a result, we will have to count the lives lost in China and around the world for far too long. This malfeasance is another example of the CCP's treatment of their own people and reminds us this is the same regime who puts millions of their own citizens in "concentration camps" and uses them for forced labor.

As you know, the United States is the largest funder of the WHO, contributing more than \$893 million during their current two-year budget cycle. While the United States was assessed dues by the WHO totaling \$118 million for the current cycle, Congress has provided an additional \$657 million in voluntary funding. In comparison, during the same budget cycle, the People's Republic of China (PRC) contributed approximately \$86 million in both assessed dues and voluntary contributions.

Signs of the outbreak of a new, deadly virus in Wuhan were visible in early December 2019, when Zhang Jixian, a doctor at the Hubei Provincial Hospital, warned PRC health authorities that a novel coronavirus was affecting some 180 patients. Several other doctors publicly discussed the outbreak in an attempt to sound the alarm but were subsequently arrested

by PRC authorities or disciplined by their supervisors. A senior doctor at the Wuhan Central Hospital, Ai Fen, instructed her staff to wear protective clothing and masks despite PRC official instructions to the contrary. In a later interview, she said “I knew there must be human-to-human transmission.” Despite this, China did not send any information on COVID-19 whatsoever to the WHO until December 31st. That same day, Taiwan warned the WHO that medical staff in China were becoming ill via human-to-human transmission.

Six days after Taiwan warned the WHO about human-to-human transmission, on January 5th, the WHO released a statement claiming that “based on the preliminary information from the Chinese investigative team, no evidence of significant human-to-human transmission and no health care worker infections have been reported.” This is despite Taiwan’s clear warning and reports from Chinese doctors that human-to-human transmission was occurring. On January 23rd, as Wuhan was being locked down, the WHO Emergency Committee was split on declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). As Director-General, Tedros had the deciding vote – he opted not to declare a public health emergency. Days later, he praised China’s response to COVID-19, calling the response and PRC’s transparency “very impressive, and beyond words.” He went on to say that the PRC was “actually setting a new standard for outbreak response.” This was despite widespread reporting that the PRC had obfuscated information and delayed its initial response. According to a professor of global health law at Georgetown University, the WHO’s public statements misled public health experts, “giving a false sense of assurance” that contributed to the spread of the disease. The WHO did not announce a PHEIC until January 30th. It is likely that this delay contributed to a regional epidemic becoming a global pandemic.

On January 6th, the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) offered to send a team of experts to China to assist the PRC’s response. Their offer was turned down. It was not until February 16th, 41 days later, that a joint WHO-PRC mission traveled to China to examine the outbreak and origin of COVID-19. Many members of that team, including at least one American, were not allowed to visit Wuhan. It was not until February 28th that their report was allowed to be published. This delay was a result of the PRC’s refusal to allow the use of certain language, such as describing the virus as “dangerous.” The same day, the first COVID-19 death occurred on U.S. soil. It would take another twelve days for the WHO to declare a pandemic, after 114 countries reported 118,000 cases; more than 4,600 people had already died.

Director-General Tedros has failed in his mandate to objectively respond to the largest global health crisis since the HIV/AIDS pandemic reached its peak in the mid-2000s. Similar criticism was brought to bear on his leadership during the WHO’s response to the recent Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the New York Times, Director-General Tedros reportedly covered up three cholera epidemics in Ethiopia during his time as Minister of Health. In addition to a troubled record of response to health emergencies, Director-General Tedros has a record of embracing PRC propaganda and policies. After serving as Minister of Health, Director-General Tedros served as Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister from 2012-2016. During his tenure, China invested \$13.6 billion in his home country, leading many to refer to Addis Ababa as “the city China built.” The next year, during his candidacy for his current office, he was supported by the Chinese. In the days leading up to the election, he gave a public speech at a Chinese university in Beijing where he praised the PRC for its global health and

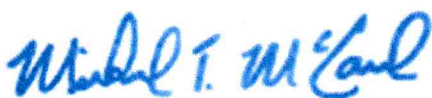
disease control work. The day after his election as Director-General, he announced that the WHO would follow the PRC's "One China" policy which resulted in Taiwan being banned from participating any longer in WHO forums. As a result, despite Taiwan warning the WHO on December 31st that human-to-human transmission was occurring, that information was not published on the WHO's platform for data exchange amongst its member countries.

In sum, there are several concerning facts that have been established:

- WHO knew that COVID-19 was spreading through human-to-human interaction at least three weeks before it informed the rest of the world.
- Director-General Tedros' policies prevented the WHO from heeding Taiwan's warning and undermined the credibility of the information Taiwan provided to other countries.
- Director-General Tedros cast the tie breaking vote that delayed the declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, despite clear evidence of the rapid spread and human-to-human transmission of COVID-19.
- Director-General Tedros heaped praise on the PRC despite clear evidence that the Chinese government COVID-19 cover up delayed the proper response to the initial outbreak.
- Director-General Tedros' long-standing relationship with PRC authorities and embrace of CCP propaganda and polices undermines his ability to serve impartially as Director-General.

As such, we have lost faith in Director-General Tedros' ability to lead the World Health Organization. We understand, and value, the vital role that the WHO plays around the world, especially in acute humanitarian settings. At times, the WHO is the only organization working on the ground in the worst places in the world, and the U.S. should continue to support this important work. However, it is imperative that we act swiftly to ensure the impartiality, transparency, and legitimacy of this valuable institution. In light of the information presented in this letter, we recommend that you condition any future Fiscal Year 2020 voluntary contributions to the WHO on the resignation of Director-General Tedros. Sadly, we know COVID-19 is not the last pandemic the world will have to face.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Ranking Member



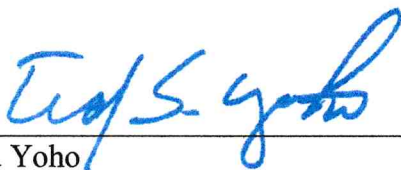
Christopher Smith
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



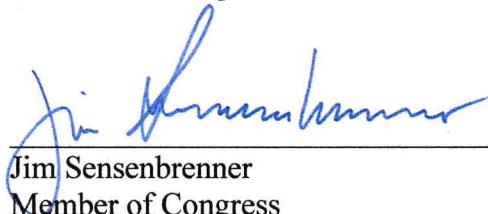
Scott Perry
Member of Congress



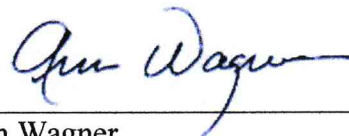
Ted Yoho
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Adam Kinzinger
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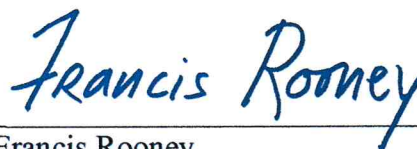
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