

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
S-230 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
S-221 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you finalize the FY 2021 Appropriations bills, we write to thank you for your leadership on global health security, support for multilateral organizations and vaccine research and development that was evident in both the House & the Senate FY 2021 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Bills. Additionally, we respectfully request that you include the Securing America from Epidemics (SAFE) Act in the final FY 2021 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Bill.

The SAFE Act authorizes the United States to participate in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), an international public-private partnership developing COVID-19 vaccine candidates and helping to lead efforts to build an international vaccine cooperation mechanism. It is critical that the United States work with the international community, including CEPI, to quickly develop, manufacture, and distribute a COVID-19 vaccine.

The United States' full participation in CEPI is essential for success against this pandemic and for true preparedness against the next pandemic, which is a historical certainty. CEPI works with industry, researchers, and governments to proactively develop vaccines for emerging threats with significant epidemic or pandemic potential – filling a critical role where no commercial market exists, yet the potential need is universal – including every American. Additionally, CEPI develops vaccine platforms that provide a rapid response capability for vaccine development for still unknown threats – the so-called disease X, of which COVID is a perfect example. CEPI's investments in vaccine development before the pandemic provided a significant head-start on development of some of the vaccines rolling out now. We now know exactly how such head-start investment is an essential part of a pandemic preparedness and response strategy.

The benefit of CEPI's leadership on COVID vaccines extends far beyond the current pandemic. Sustaining CEPI's ability to pursue both COVID and emerging threats is essential to both current pandemic response and proactive preparation for brewing threats requires investment now – not once COVID is controlled or defeated. For this reason, it is imperative that Congress set the clear legal foundations and expectations for the Government's mandate and participation to CEPI, as well as provide a basis for their oversight and accountability for results - without which our participation in CEPI would not be commensurate with our participation and leadership in other global health partnerships, including Gavi and the Global Fund. Full participation in CEPI will also allow for the United States to participate in CEPI's governance and prioritization of effort, providing for coordination and alignment with our own countermeasure research and development efforts.

Absent multi-year authorization, Congress cannot appropriate funding directly to CEPI, nor would USAID have the legal authority to make general contributions to the partnership as all other participants do. At a time when CEPI's essential role in pandemic response is so evident, failing to prioritize this would be a missed opportunity for U.S. global leadership and undervalue a partnership that has so clearly been successful in the race to beat this pandemic and essential for preparing for the next. The difference will be measured in lives and economic losses that we cannot afford.

Authorization of CEPI by including the SAFE Act in the final FY21 Appropriations Bill will send a clear indication by Congress that the U.S. is committed to CEPI's continued success and has set clear expectations for results; that the U.S. is committed to multilateral partnerships and cooperative efforts to address universal vulnerabilities; that burden sharing among countries is required; and that the essential role of the private sector is leveraged for maximum effect.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to working with you to protect Americans from COVID-19 and future pandemics.

Sincerely,

Global Health Council
Global Health Technology Coalition
Management Sciences For Health
PAN
PATH
ONE
Shot@Life