



Covid-19 Loss
SUPPORT
for Family & Friends



Dear Chairwoman Senator Murray (D-WA) and Ranking Member Senator Burr (R-NC):

We write to express our support of the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics (PREVENT Pandemics Act), draft legislation being considered by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, in particular Section 101 that would establish a National Task Force on the Response of the United States to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We also write to share our suggestions to achieve our shared goal of studying the nation's pandemic response and make recommendations to mitigate and prevent future pandemics.

We support the PREVENT Pandemics Act because it would establish a National Coronavirus Task Force to examine the United States' preparedness for and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force will be most successful if it **centers on the experiences** and needs of the communities that have been most severely impacted by the pandemic.

We support the National Task Force in part because it will examine topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- relevant laws, policies and regulations in place during the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19;
- intergovernmental and intragovernmental actions and coordination;
- communication of public health and scientific information related to COVID-19;
- the development, manufacturing, and distribution of medical countermeasures and supplies;
- the origins and spread of COVID-19; and
- may include other important assessments.

The task force will also craft recommendations to identify, review, and evaluate lessons learned from the pandemic, including activities to better prepare for and respond to future pandemics.

We write and urge you to make the following changes to the proposed legislation to help ensure that this review and subsequent recommendations are as strong as possible and will truly prevent and mitigate future pandemics:

- Include language clarifying that the Task Force will center the experiences and needs of the communities that have been most severely impacted by the pandemic.



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- Require that the Task Force investigate and report on institutions that experienced high rates of infection and disease, such as hospitals, nursing homes and facilities, prisons, and other institutions critical to national security and central to the pandemic response.
- Require that the Task Force investigate and report on health and economic impacts of communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, including underserved communities, rural populations, populations of people of color, people with disabilities, and people who live on Indian reservations.
- Specify qualifications of Task Force members, specifically around public health expertise and other relevant qualifications.
- Reduce the voting requirements from 9 members to a majority of Task Force members to subpoena a witness.
- Reduce the voting requirements from 8 members to a majority of Task Force members to include a recommendation in the Final Report.
- Provide mechanisms for the monitoring and implementation of report recommendations.
- Significantly increase the budget allocation so that the Task Force is adequately funded to meet its mandate.
- Narrow the scope of review to focus on “the origins of COVID–19.”

This month, we approach a heartbreaking threshold of 1,000,000 lives taken by COVID and thousands of people are still dying every week. So many of us have had loved ones who experienced traumatic deaths. We are determined to speak out and demand the truth so that no other family ever has to experience the pain and suffering that we have. The PREVENT Pandemics Act will help ensure that our loved ones will not have died in vain.

Sincerely,

COVID Survivors for Change

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Young Widows and Widowers of Covid-19