

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

February 26, 2021

To Help End the Pandemic as Quickly as Possible and Restore U.S. International Cooperation, Please End Trump's Blockade of the COVID-19 Emergency Waiver of WTO Rules So More Vaccines and Treatment Can Be Produced

Dear President Biden,

Congratulations on becoming President. We are encouraged by the administration's steadfast efforts to eradicate COVID-19 and in so doing save countless lives and livelihoods. Many Americans are hopeful that your administration will improve the pace of COVID-19 vaccine production and deployment in the United States. But, that alone will not hasten the end of the global pandemic.

We the undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to reverse a dangerous and self-defeating position taken by President Trump that threatens the prospects of ending the COVID-19 disaster. Namely, we urge your administration to lift the U.S. blockage of the "Waiver from Certain Provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of COVID-19" supported by more than 100 nations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

With global supply limited, many people in low- and middle-income countries around the globe will not have vaccine access until at least 2022, according to the British Medical Journal. Most of the world's poorest countries will have to wait until 2024 for mass immunization if current trends continue, reports the Economist Intelligence Unit. We are sure you agree this is unacceptable.

Such global inequity is not only a catastrophic moral failure that will lead to needless suffering and loss of life. Ongoing outbreaks anywhere mean greater risk of new variants developing against which vaccines are not effective and/or that can evade the antibodies developed by survivors. **There simply is no way to defeat the pandemic in the United States without bold action worldwide.**

The science is clear: People in developing countries need urgent access to vaccines and treatments to achieve herd immunity, just as people in the United States do. Without global action, the health crisis and resulting economic crisis here and worldwide will continue. A new International Chamber of Commerce report concluded that the current best-case scenario of wealthy nations being fully vaccinated by the middle of 2021 and poor countries largely shut out could cause economic losses exceeding \$9 trillion. Nearly half of those costs would be absorbed by wealthy countries like the United States, Canada and Britain.

The WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) requires WTO signatory countries to provide lengthy monopoly protections for medicines, tests and the technologies used to produce them. After a global campaign by public health and development groups, in 2001 the WTO issued a binding declaration about better balancing TRIPS intellectual property protections and public health needs. A temporary emergency COVID-19 waiver is in line with the WTO members' agreement that intellectual property rules cannot create barriers to health treatments that unnecessarily cost human lives and undermine the global economy.

Notably, governments, particularly the United States, provided billions in upfront payments, clinical trial support, and guaranteed purchase, so pharmaceutical firms did not bear risk. Many precursor technologies used in the new vaccines resulted from long-term U.S. government efforts, in collaboration with scientists in the United States and around the world. Yet now the corporations will control where and how much vaccine is made. Even as some firms holding vaccine monopolies have contracted others to manufacture, there is insufficient supply. Thus, while U.S. participation in programs like COVAX is important, unless production is quickly ramped up around the world to meet global demand, there simply will not be enough supply for COVAX to provide countries in need. The corporate monopoly rights and resulting supply shortages also threaten access for billions of people in the developing world, to the COVID-19 treatments that are bringing down mortality rates here. The TRIPS rules limit government options to gain access to vital COVID treatments at an affordable price.

Today, the many nations that cannot obtain the COVID-19 vaccines and treatments needed to cover their populations must attempt to negotiate the slow "product by product" and "country by country" compulsory license approach allowed under TRIPS. (And attempts to exercise these rights has led to fierce U.S. opposition in recent years, evidenced in the U.S. government's Special 301 Report.) In contrast, the TRIPS waiver would remove a key obstacle to governments and manufacturers worldwide accessing the technology needed to invest in making COVID vaccines and treatments as rapidly as possible, in as many places as possible, for the billions who still need them.

It is rare that one policy change can so significantly impact a global health effort that could save millions of lives. Supporting this waiver is the right thing to do in and of itself. But doing so would be not only altruistic. Ending the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible worldwide is also necessary to reboot the global economy on which so much of the U.S. economy relies.

And, with so many of the world's nations supporting this emergency waiver already, you can also help restore America's moral and public health leadership in the world by siding with the majority to prioritize saving lives over protecting pharmaceutical corporation monopolies and profits. This new position would be widely noted, given U.S. officials' shameful attack on the waiver at a January WTO meeting.

We welcomed your promise "absolutely positively" to commit to sharing technology and access to any COVID-19 vaccine developed in the US, during an interview with Ady Barkan. At the time you said, "It's the only humane thing in the world to do. It's not only a good thing to do, it's overwhelmingly in our interest to do it as well." We are asking you to deliver on that promise.

Thus, we respectfully request that you break with the unconscionable policies Trump supported and, before the next WTO General Council meeting March 1-2, announce that the United States will no longer oppose the temporary, emergency COVID-19 WTO waiver of certain TRIPS provisions. We also request that your administration inform our trade partners that the United States will apply the same temporary, emergency waiver of the same intellectual property rules included in U.S. bilateral and regional trade agreements for COVID-19 vaccines, testing and treatments.

Sincerely,

Citizens Trade Campaign
Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans
Frontières USA
Health GAP (Global Access Project)
Oxfam
Public Citizen
A Well-Fed World
ActionAid USA
Agricultural Justice Project
AIDS Healthcare Foundation
Alliance for Democracy (US)
Alliance for Global Justice
Alliance for Retired Americans
Alter Terra
American Federation of State, County and Municipal
Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish World Service
American Medical Student Association
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Americas Program-Mx
Amnesty International
Appetite For Change, Inc.
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers
Avaaz
AVAC
Backbone Campaign
Black AIDS Institute
Campaign for America's Future
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Digital Democracy
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Global Justice
Center for International Policy
Center for Justice & Democracy
Center for Popular Democracy Action
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Chronic Illnesses Advocacy & Awareness Group
Climate Crisis Policy
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Codepink
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Communications Workers of America (CWA)

Consumer Action
CPATH (Center for Policy Analysis on Trade &
Health)
Daily Kos
Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Co.
Debs-Jones-Douglass Institute
Demand Progress
Democratic Socialists of America, International
Committee, Economics & Trade Subcommittee
Disruption Project
Doctors For America
Drug Prices Are Too High
Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Island Institute
EcoEquity
El Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.
Environmentalists Against War
Ethix Merch
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Fair World Project
Family Farm Defenders
Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR-USA)
Fight for the Future
Focus on the Global South
Franciscan Action Network
Free Speech For People
Friends of Angola
Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict
Global Exchange
Greenpeace
Health Alliance International
Health and Development Consulting International
Hip-Hop Caucus
Holy Cross International Justice Office
Hope Border Institute
Human Rights Watch
Indivisible
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Project
Interfaith Service to Latin America
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace
Workers
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Center for Technology Assessment

International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
InterReligious Task Force On Central America
Jamyang Foundation
Jewish Voice for Peace Action
Jewish World Watch
Jobs With Justice
Justice Is Global
Knowledge Commune
Labor Network for Sustainability
Latin America Working Group
League of Women Voters of the United States
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Moana Nui
Move To Amend
Movement Strategy Center (Climate Innovation)
MoveOn
National Association of Consumer Advocates
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Consumers League
National Family Farm Coalition
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
National Lawyers Guild International Committee
National Nurses United
National Organization for Women
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Rules for Global Finance
Nicaragua Center for Community Action
Nicaraguan Cultural Alliance
Nigerian American Public Affairs Committee
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Ode to Earth/Echoes of Silence
Other98
Our Revolution
Partners In Health
Peace Action
People Demanding Action
People's Action
People's Health Movement–USA
Pesticide Action Network
Physicians for a National Health Program
Popular Resistance
PrEP4All
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Pride at Work
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Progressive Democrats of America
Progressive Doctors
Quixote Center
R2H Action [Right to Health]
Rainforest Information Centre

Revolving Door Project
RootsAction.org
Rural Coalition
Serengeti Watch
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sierra Club
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Social Security Works
Society of Development and Care
Sunrise Movement
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Altai Project
The Borneo Project
The Democracy Collaborative
The Episcopal Church
The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
The Oakland Institute
The Rick Smith Show
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Trade Justice Alliance
Transport Workers Union of America
Treatment Action Group
Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign (TALC)
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
UNITE HERE
United Brotherhood of Carpenters
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)
United Steelworkers
Veterans For Peace
Washington Office on Latin America
Wild Heritage
Win Without War
Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US
World Renew

350 Seattle
Action Together Connecticut
AFSCME Local 328
AFT MA
AFT Seattle Community Colleges Local 1789
AFT Washington
AFT-Oregon
AHBLEZA Ranch
Alaska Clean Water Advocacy
Albany Labor Council

Allston Brighton Health Collaborative
American Friends Service Committee, Colorado
Americans for Democratic Action Iowa
Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera
Australian Human Rights Institute
Baltimore, Maryland Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter
Veterans For Peace
Bay Area For Bernie
Beacon of Light Ministry
Beacon Presbyterian Fellowship
Border Agricultural Workers Project
Boston Workers Circle Center for Jewish Culture and
Social Justice
Boulder Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Boulder Democratic Socialists of America
Bronx River Bicycle Works
California Nurses Association / National Nurses
United
California Trade Justice Coalition
CancerFam
Casa Baltimore Limay
Cascade AIDS Project
Center for Law, Innovation and Creativity,
Northeastern University School of Law
Central Florida AFL-CIO
Central Maine Labor Council
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin
America
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
Church Council of Greater Seattle
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Climate Action Now!
Coalition to Protect New York
Colorado Young Democrats
Columbia Postdoctoral Workers - UAW Local 4100
Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local
2205
Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local
1081
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community Services Unlimited Inc.
Congregation Beth El, Bangor Maine
Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG)
Connecticut Fair Trade Coalition
Conservation Congress
Coulee Region Progressives
Cross Border Network
DC Jobs With Justice
Defend Our Health
Democratic Party of Wisconsin Progressive Caucus
Democracy for Connecticut
Denver Justice and Peace Committee
DownRiver Alliance
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian
Universalist Church
Esperanza Peace and Justice Center
Faith Action Network
Faith Lutheran Church
Family Action Network Movement
Farmworker Association of Florida
Filipino Community of Seattle
First Unitarian - Economic Justice Action Group
Florida Alliance for Retired Americans
Florida Peace & Justice Alliance
Food AND Medicine
Food Shift
Food for Maine's Future
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR)
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice
Ft. Myers Chapter of World Beyond War
Future March
Greater Boston Trade Justice
Greater Brunswick PeaceWorks
Greater Kansas City Coalition Of Union Women
Health Care for All Oregon - Action
Health Care For All Texas
Health Care for All Washington
Health Care Is a Human Right WA
Hesperian Health Guides
HIV + Aging Research Project - Palm Springs
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
HomeBorn Health, PLLC
Hometown Action
IBEW L.U. 1253
Idaho Alliance for Retired Americans (IDARA)
Illinois Coalition for Clean Air & Water
Illinois Single-Payer Coalition
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center
Interfaith Community Services
Iowa Alliance for Retired Americans
Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
IUE-CWA Local 84775
Jefferson County Young Democrats
Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37
Judson Memorial Church
Kate Mullany Chapter Coalition Labor Union Woman
Kickapoo Peace Circle
KyotoUSA
Labor Dem Work Group
Labor for Bernie
Local Majority
LULAC of Greater Cincinnati
LULAC Ohio
Maine AFL-CIO
Maine Council of Churches
Maine Fair Trade Campaign
Maine Health Care Action
Maine Labor Group on Health
Michiana Peace and Justice Coalition

Milwaukee Fair Trade Coalition [Wisconsin, USA]
MLK Labor Council
MSEA-SEIU Local 1989
Nature in the City
New Jersey Tenants Organization
New York State Alliance for Retired Americans
New York State Nurses Association
New York Trade Justice Coalition
NH Citizens for Progress
NH Conference United Church of Christ, Economic
Justice Mission Group
NJ State Industrial Union Council
No Justice No Pride
Northlake Lutheran Church
Oakland Tenants Union
Occupy Bellingham
Occupy Bergen County
Ohio Fair Trade Campaign
Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans
Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals
Oregon Nurses Association
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Oregon Progressive Party
Oregon Steelworkers Legislative and Education
Committee
Our Illinois Revolution
Our Revolution SCV
Our Revolution Texas
Our Revolution Western Maryland
Pacific Green Party
Park Slope Food Coop
PAUSE - People of Albany United for Safe Energy
Peace Action Bay Ridge
Peace Action Maine
Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine
Peace House
Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW!
Peninsula Peace & Justice Blue Hill Maine
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Peoples Climate Movement-New York
Physicians for a National Health Program Illinois
Pima Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
Planting Justice
PODER (People Organized in Defense of Earth & her
Resources)
Portland Central America Solidarity Committee
(PCASC)
Portland Interfaith Clergy Resistance
Portland Jobs with Justice
Portland Raging Grannies
Portland's UnShul
Power In Community Alliance (PICA)
Professional Fire Fighters of Maine
Progressive Democrats of America - Arizona
Progressive Democrats of America - Calumet Region

Progressive Democrats of America - Tucson Chapter
Progressive Democrats of the Santa Monica
Mountains
PROTEC17 - Professional & Technical Employees,
Local 17
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action
Radio Free Maine/Button ME
Represent Us Pasco County
Rochester Joint Board, Workers United, SEIU
San Francisco Gray Panthers
San Francisco Living Wage Coalition
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic Midwest
Province
Seattle DSA
Seattle Education Association
Seattle Fellowship of Reconciliation
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province
Leadership
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Society of Professional Engineering Employees in
Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE 2001
Solidarity Committee of the Capital District
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and
Training Inc (SAFEST)
South Austin Coalition
South Central Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
South Florida LCLAA
Southern Appalachian Labor School
Southern Maine Labor Council
Southern Maine Workers' Center
Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development
Sunrise Movement at Penn State Harrisburg
Sunrise Movement, Greater Morgantown Hub
Sustainable Tompkins, Inc.
Terraza 7 / RACA
Texas Alliance for Retired Americans
Texas Alliance for Retired Americans Houston
Chapter
Texas American Federation of Teachers
Texas Fair Trade Coalition
The Enviro Show
The Episcopal Church in Western Oregon
The New 21st Century Movement Association
The People's Lobby
The Question Alliance
The Walk for Mental Health Awareness - Houston
The Wilson Center / MCA
Toledo Area Jobs with Justice & Interfaith Worker
Justice Coalition
TradeJustice New York Metro
Transformations CDC
UAW 4121
Unitarian Universalist Action New Hampshire

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County
(UUFHC)
Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor (Maine)
Social Justice Committee
UNITE HERE Local 5
United Campus Workers Colorado
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 2013
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555
United Steelworkers District 12
United Steelworkers District 13
United Steelworkers Local 1097
United Steelworkers Local 175
United Steelworkers Local 1852
United Steelworkers Local 2-248
United Steelworkers Local 4-00291
United Steelworkers Local 900
United Steelworkers Maine Labor Council
United Steelworkers SOAR Chapter 7-1
United Steelworkers Local 675
Urban Appalachian Community Coalition
UW United Students Against Sweatshops
Veterans For Peace, Spokane Chapter #35
Viva Sierra Gorda
WA 5th District Democrats

Washington Against Nuclear Weapons Coalition
Washington Biotechnology Action Council
Washington Community Action Network
Washington Fair Trade Coalition
Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME
Council 28
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
Washington State 31st Legislative District Democrats
Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans
Washington State Labor Council
Wes Shore Farm
Wesley United Methodist Church
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Whatcom Peace & Justice Center
Whole Washington
Wild Oyster Project
Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wisconsin Grassroots Network
Women's Health Institute
Working Families Party (Upstate NY)
World Beyond War-Central Florida Chapter
WV Citizen Action Education Fund
WV Citizen Action Group