



December 7, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Thank you for your continued commitment to Americans' health and wellbeing during the coronavirus pandemic. Reopening the economy and reducing unemployment while protecting the health of every American requires an investment in the health workforce equal to the scope and scale of the challenge. It is with this challenge in mind that we write in support of *the Health Force and Resilience Force Act of 2020* (S. 3606/H.R. 6808) and urge you to consider the legislation for inclusion in the next coronavirus relief package.

The Health Force and Resilience Force Act would strengthen capacity to address our country's ongoing and future public health needs by recruiting, training and employing thousands of Americans into public health jobs. The legislation would provide flexible federal funding to State, local, territorial and Tribal governments to create a public health workforce representative of and adaptable to each community's specific needs. These public and community health frontline workers could be deployed for contact tracing, public health information campaigns, coronavirus testing, medicine and food deliveries to those in quarantine, assistance for those who are sick or eventual vaccine administration, among other employments. The positions would complement America's highly trained and skilled medical professionals already fighting on the front lines. Moreover, the Health Force would prepare the American public health system to respond to future threats, so that never again would we have to respond to a health crisis of this magnitude with such limited personnel resources.

At a time when so many Americans are under or unemployed, the legislation would create jobs. Equally important, it will combat health inequities by recruiting individuals who are reflective of the communities they serve, thereby strengthening connections between communities and health systems. Evidence shows that a more diverse, community-based workforce can increase health access, reduce health inequities, and improve outcomes for communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ A more diverse public health workforce also means a more developed pipeline for medical and nursing students from minority communities.

¹ American Public Health Association. Support for community health workers to increase health access and to reduce health inequities. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association; 2009

We applaud Senators Gillibrand and Bennet and Representatives Underwood, Crow and Panetta for laying out a clear, sound public health strategy that will re-open our economy, keep it open and replace thousands of much needed jobs. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



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