

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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April 30, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

We write regarding your April 14, 2020 letter with Chairman Stephen Lynch to President Trump expressing your concerns over the President's decision to temporarily withhold U.S. taxpayer dollars from the World Health Organization (WHO).¹ Given the acknowledgement in your accompanying press release—"the WHO has shortcomings that must be corrected"—the President's decision was both reasonable and legitimate.² In light of such an admission, coupled with multiple media reports of WHO's failures,³ we request immediate briefings, and hearings next month, on the WHO's relationship with the Communist Party of China (CCP) and its widely criticized response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.⁴

The potential misuse of taxpayer dollars is at the heart of the Committee's jurisdiction, and we owe it to the American people to evaluate how the WHO has been spending their hard-earned money. The American taxpayer is the single largest contributor to the WHO, providing approximately \$900 million every two years, ten times greater than China's contribution.⁵ Notwithstanding this drastic imbalance in funding, the United States should not support

¹ Letter from Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman, H. Comm on Oversight & Reform, and Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, Subcomm. on National Security, to Donald J. Trump, President of the United States (Apr. 14, 2020); Ian Schwartz, *Trump halts WHO Funding: Full Accountability Needed For "Covering Up The Spread Of Coronavirus" For China*, REALCLEAR POLITICS (Apr. 14, 2020), https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2020/04/14/trump_halts_who_funding_full_accountability_for_pushing_chinas_misinformation_about_coronavirus.html.

² Press Release, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, *Chairs Maloney and Lynch Urge Trump to Immediately Restore Funding to World Health Organization Amid Coronavirus Pandemic* (Apr. 14, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/chairs-maloney-and-lynch-urge-trump-to-immediately-restore-funding-to-world>.

³ THE EDITORS, *WHO Failed*, NATIONAL REVIEW (Apr. 7, 2020), <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/04/coronavirus-pandemic-world-health-organization-failed/>; THE EDITORIAL BOARD, *World Health Coronavirus Disinformation*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Apr. 5, 2020), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/world-health-coronavirus-disinformation-11586122093>.

⁴ Letter from Jim D. Jordan et. al., Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, to Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (Apr. 9, 2020).

⁵ Hollie McKay, *Coronavirus: US gives 10 times the amount of money to WHO than China*, Fox News (Apr. 10, 2020), <https://www.foxnews.com/world/coronavirus-us-china-who-world-health-organization-china>.

organizations that promulgate communist propaganda instead of the facts. Our republic is not obligated to hand money to an entity that espouses ideals of international cooperation while furthering the Chinese's government's machinations.

Instead of addressing China's misrepresentations about COVID-19 and the WHO's reliance on this Chinese disinformation or focusing on finding bipartisan solutions, you have continued to use the Committee's powerful oversight and investigative tools for purely political purposes. Since the first U.S. case of COVID-19 on January 19, 2020,⁶ you and your subcommittee chairs have sent letters to companies on a variety of issues including e-cigarettes,⁷ children's booster seats,⁸ Talc powder,⁹ bottling of groundwater,¹⁰ and infant recliners.¹¹ The one common theme among the recipients is that each is currently being targeted by the plaintiffs' bar in class action lawsuits.¹² These letters request proprietary information that, if shared, would give those trial lawyers an edge in ongoing cases. This is an abuse of the Committee's Rule X powers.

As you are aware, we are actively investigating China's propaganda and disinformation efforts surrounding COVID-19, including the WHO's reported negligence in the beginnings of

⁶ Michell L. Holshue, et al., *First Case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in the United States*, *The New England Journal of Medicine* (Mar. 5, 2020), <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2001191>; House Comm. on Oversight & Reform, *Letters* (Last accessed Apr. 20, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/letters>.

⁷ Letter from Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, Subcomm. on Economic and Consumer Policy, to Stephen M. Hahn, Commissioner, Food and Drug Admin., (Jan. 22, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-01-22.RK%20to%20Hahn-FDA%20re%20Flavors%20Ban%20%281%29.pdf>

⁸ Letter from Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, Subcomm. on Economic and Consumer Policy, to Jon Chamberlain, Chief Executive Office, Evenflo Company, Inc., (Feb. 12, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-02-12.RK%20to%20Chamberlain-Evenflo%20re%20Big%20Kid%20Seat1.pdf>.

⁹ Letter from Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, Subcomm. on Economic and Consumer Policy, to Stephen M. Hahn, Commissioner, Food and Drug Admin., (Mar. 3, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-03-03.RK%20to%20Hahn-FDA%20re%20Asbestos%20Testing%20Standard.pdf>.

¹⁰ Letter from Harley Rouda, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, Subcomm. on Environment, to Fernando Merce, Chief Executive Officer, Nestle Waters North America, (Mar. 3, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-03-03.Rouda%20Tlaib%20to%20Merce-Nestle%20re%20Bottled%20Water%20FINAL.pdf>.

¹¹ Letter from Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, to Ravi Saligram, Chief Executive Officer, Newell Brands, (Mar. 6, 2020), <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-03-05.CBM%20to%20Saligram-%20Graco%20re%20Care%20Station%20Playard.pdf>.

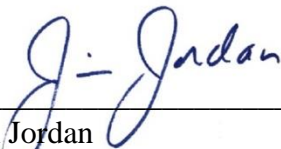
¹² Terry Turner, *E-Cigarette Lawsuits*, DRUGWATCH (Mar. 9, 2020), <https://www.drugwatch.com/e-cigarettes/lawsuits/>; HAGENS BERMAN, *Evenflo Big Kid Booster Car Seat* (Last Accessed Apr. 20, 2020), <https://www.hbsslaw.com/cases/evenflo-big-kid-booster-car-seat>; Michelle Llamas, *Talcum Powder Lawsuits*, DRUGWATCH (Mar. 24, 2020), <https://www.drugwatch.com/talcum-powder/lawsuits/>; Chavie Lieber, *A lawsuit is accusing Poland Springs of selling "ordinary groundwater"*, VOX (Apr. 3, 2020), <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2019/4/3/18292549/poland-spring-water-nestle-lawsuit-spring-water>; Meghan Kenealy, *Class-action lawsuit filed against Fisher-Price and Mattel over Rock 'N Play sleeper*, ABC News (Apr. 24, 2019), <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/class-action-lawsuit-filed-fisher-price-mattel-rock/story?id=62597754>.

the crisis.¹³ Thus far, we have discovered China not only disseminated misinformation surrounding the origins of COVID-19 but also attempted to depict the CCP as the global leader in public health.¹⁴ Much like every failed, communist regime that has come before it, the CCP wants to convince the world socialism, communism, and authoritarianism are better than freedom, liberty, and democracy.¹⁵

The WHO parroted the regime's disinformation on multiple occasions, including denying human to human transmission of the virus, prolonged naming COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, chastised efforts to restrict travel, and continued to praise China as a global leader in public health despite mounting evidence to the contrary.¹⁶ The WHO's inaction and delay undoubtedly cost American lives. For these reasons, we commend the President's decision to temporarily pause the WHO's funding.

We have been in contact with the Ethiopian Embassy regarding a response to the April 9, 2020 letter from Republican Members to the WHO.¹⁷ We hope you will abandon your concerted effort to aid the plaintiff's bar and join in our efforts to conduct oversight of the WHO. To that end, and to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent appropriately, we request immediate briefings, and hearings next month. The WHO and any other entity or country misrepresenting pandemic data must be held accountable. We look forward to you joining us on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Oversight and Reform



Jody B. Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on
Government Operations



James R. Comer
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy

¹³ Letter from Jody B. Hice, et. al., Ranking Member, H. Comm. On Oversight & Reform, Subcomm. On Government Operations, to Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary, U.S. Dep't of State (Apr. 2, 2020); Jim D. Jordan *supra* note 4.

¹⁴ U.S. Dep't of State Briefing to H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform Staff (Apr. 15, 2020).

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Jim D. Jordan *supra* note 4.

¹⁷ E-mail from Ethiopian Embassy to Committee Staff (Apr. 16, 2020).

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney

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Chip E. Roy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and
Civil Liberties



Glenn S. Grothman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security

cc: The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Harley E. Rouda, Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment