

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2020

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General of the World Health Organization
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Director-General Tedros:

We write to you today to raise concerns about Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Organization (WHO) in light of the quickly growing outbreak of a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). This virus was first detected in Wuhan, China and is beginning to spread to other locations, including Taiwan and the United States.

As you know, the WHO was first made aware of this novel coronavirus on December 31, 2019 and the disease has spread quickly. Since its discovery, 2019-nCoV has infected thousands in China alone and spread to at least 23 more countries around the world. This virus has also proven deadly as more than 200 people have died in the country of origin. Dangerous communicable diseases such as this require a coordinated global effort, and it is times like these where countries with world-class capabilities, like Taiwan, should be allowed to lend their expertise toward prevention and containment efforts.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has spearheaded a concerted and persistent campaign to isolate Taiwan from the greater global community, pressuring countries and international organizations to exclude them from participation, including as an observer. Taiwan's exclusion from the WHO is an act of aggression that harms the international public health community's ability to coordinate effectively. The inability of the government of Taiwan to obtain important information regarding current global health concerns could mean that they are not provided all data necessary for a quick response. Additionally, the global community suffers as Taiwan is unable to coordinate with WHO officials and health officials from member states to craft a more harmonized global response to active crises. Now that the world is attempting to intercept a deadly new coronavirus before it becomes a pandemic, it is vital that unacceptable diplomatic bullying tactics do not stand in the way of Taiwan's critical participation in this fight.

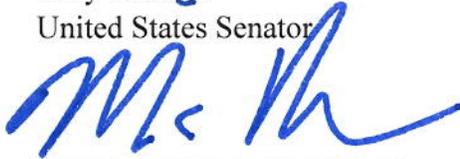
The PRC also hid details about the spread of 2019-nCoV and arrested those who attempted to alert the Chinese public in January. It is an unacceptable health hazard to the 23 million people of Taiwan to rely on a demonstrably unreliable PRC to receive information from the WHO. Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport is one of the busiest airports in Asia for both passengers and freight. The hazards of relying on the PRC to facilitate a common understanding have regional implications, especially for Asian countries that lack Taiwan's advanced healthcare system.

To better protect international global health and security, we urge you and the WHO to grant Taiwan observer status at WHO meetings and gatherings. In the interim, we request that you provide Taiwan with the information and assistance they need to deal with this latest outbreak as you would any member or observer of your organization. We must ensure that this communicable and deadly virus is contained and that means working with our international partners anywhere the virus is detected, including the island of Taiwan. We look forward to working with you and other key officials as we combat this new pathogen.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



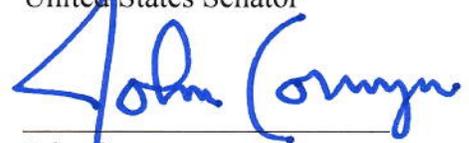
James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
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John Cornyn
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