

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Vice President:

We write to express our concern about the significant level of disinformation spreading across the country regarding coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). We believe the federal government must take strong and immediate steps to combat this problem.

First, the Administration should launch a public service announcement campaign to disseminate critical information on COVID-19 to all Americans. These announcements should be based on the best scientific information and should provide the public with information on how to minimize the risk of acquiring the illness, what steps to take if you suspect you have been exposed, and how to go about seeking medical treatment if you feel sick. In times of crisis, the federal government has a long history of launching public service announcement campaigns in partnership with nonprofit organizations, such as the Ad Council. For example, during World War II, the federal government launched several ad campaigns to encourage Americans to register for the draft, buy war bonds, and call on Americans to work in factories to help produce necessary weapons and equipment to support our troops.

Second, the data pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic should be updated at least twice per day, seven days a week on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website to ensure full transparency with the American people. Public trust in our institutions is crucial, and the public is looking to our institutions for clear information right now.

Third, Congress and the Administration should further consider measures to hold social media companies accountable if they allow disinformation to run rampant on their platforms. Disinformation on COVID-19 not only sows confusion and discord, it can also cost human lives. This is not a partisan issue—it is a national security issue. Social media companies have a public responsibility to ensure that fact-based announcements from public officials are easily disseminated, while misinformation is immediately flagged and removed.

In this pivotal moment, Americans are uniquely dependent on their leaders to do the right thing and save lives. We urge you to launch a unified, nonpartisan call to action, to ensure Americans have the latest data available online, and to prevent disinformation from spreading online. Should the federal government need additional funds to take any of these steps, Congress should stand ready to assist.

Sincerely,



REP. MAX ROSE (NY-11)
Co-Chair, Task Force on National Security
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. KENDRA HORN (OK-05)
Co-Chair, Task Force on National Security
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. STEPHANIE MURPHY (FL-07)
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REP. TOM O'HALLERAN (AZ-01)
Co-Chair for Policy
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. LOU CORREA (CA-46)
Co-Chair for Communications
Blue Dog Coalition



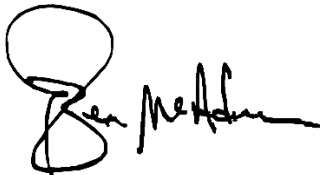
REP. ANTHONY BRINDISI (NY-22)
Co-Chair for Whip
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. KURT SCHRADER (OR-05)
Co-Chair
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. JIM COSTA (CA-16)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. BEN MCADAMS (UT-04)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. VICENTE GONZALEZ (TX-15)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition



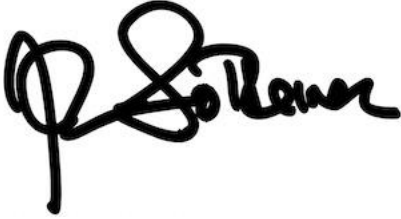
Ed Case

REP. ED CASE (HI-01)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition



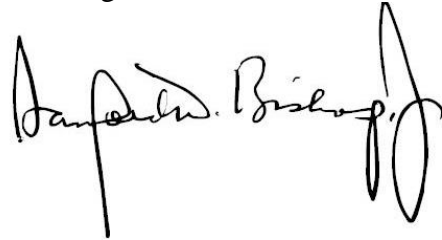
Abigail Spanberger

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