

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

We write to you to express our strong support for the passage of legislation establishing a national commission on the COVID-19 pandemic, modeled on the 2002 legislation creating the “National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States,” also known as the 9-11 Commission. We believe H.R. 6429 from the 116th Congress, introduced by Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) and Rep. John Katko (R-NY), provides a good template.

The COVID commission would consist of 10 well-respected individuals, five appointed by Democrats and five appointed by Republicans, and would be supported by a non-partisan staff of subject-matter experts. The commission would examine how COVID-19 emerged and spread in the United States; evaluate the United States’ preparedness for and response to the pandemic; and issue a report providing Congress, the President, and the American people with a full accounting of what occurred and recommending concrete steps the U.S. public and private sector can take to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the harmful impact of future pandemics. The purpose of the commission would not be to point fingers or assign blame, but rather to make the United States stronger and more resilient if we face another pandemic.

Importantly, as part of its mandate, the commission would build on the work that is currently being conducted by the intelligence community and other components of the federal government to investigate the precise origins of COVID-19 in China. Understanding exactly how COVID-19 originated and how its initial spread began is critical to creating an accurate historical account of the pandemic and is vital to helping the United States prepare for future pandemics. The Chinese government will predictably object to this effort to learn the truth. Its objections should be noted and then disregarded.

In the wake of both the 9-11 attacks and the 2007-2008 financial crisis, Congress came together on a bipartisan basis to establish independent commissions to learn from the past and prepare for the future. It would be unthinkable if Congress were not to follow this sound precedent and establish a commission to investigate a pandemic that has already claimed the lives of more than 600,000 Americans and upended our nation's economy.

Sincerely,



REP. MIKIE SHERRILL (NJ-11)
Chair, Task Force on National Security
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. STEPHANIE MURPHY (FL-07)
Co-Chair for Whip
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. TOM O'HALLERAN (AZ-01)
Co-Chair for Administration
Blue Dog Coalition



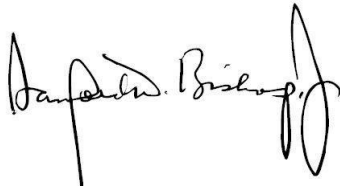
REP. ED CASE (HI-01)
Co-Chair for Policy
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. ABIGAIL SPANBERGER (VA-07)
Co-Chair for Communications
Blue Dog Coalition



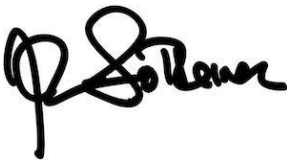
REP. KURT SCHRADER (OR-05)
Co-Chair
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. SANFORD BISHOP (GA-02)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition



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



REP. JOSH GOTTHEIMER (NJ-05)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition