

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

As Members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we write to respectfully express our view regarding Congress's consideration of the American Rescue Plan, President Biden's \$1.9 trillion proposal to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis.

We share the Administration's sense of urgency. Millions of Americans have filed for unemployment and are struggling to put food on the table. As coronavirus variants begin to develop and spread across the country, states are struggling to keep up with the demand for vaccines and need relief without delay. Therefore, our preferred legislative approach is to swiftly vote on the portion of the Administration's proposal focused on vaccine development and distribution, while the other larger, complementary elements of the proposed package are crafted and move through the House and Senate as quickly as possible. We believe a standalone vaccine bill would pass the House, obtain at least 60 votes in the Senate, and could be signed into law by President Biden this month. Providing immediate support for vaccination efforts would save lives and strengthen the economy as we work finalize the full Rescue plan.

Under our recommended approach, we would consider this vaccine-focused bill in parallel with the reconciliation process. We believe this simultaneous, two-track process is preferable to a reconciliation-only approach because—based on precedent—passing a reconciliation bill through both chambers could take several months under the most optimistic scenario. It is hard for us to understand why our constituents and our states should have to wait until March or even April for us to deliver essential support for our nation's vaccination efforts, if we have the votes to pass a standalone bill this month.

We are proposing this course of action because we believe that a vaccine-only bill would pass both chambers faster than the larger package. However, if we are mistaken, and Senate Republicans block this vaccine-targeted legislation, we can simply continue to include its provisions in the reconciliation bill. We will be in the exact same position as the reconciliation process moves forward, and no time will be lost.

As pragmatic Democrats, we are laser-focused on delivering results. We believe Congress should pursue this legislative option to provide the immediate vaccination support our communities and

country need, as we work with urgency to deliver the larger package required to address this health and economic crisis.

Sincerely,



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



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



REP. TOM O'HALLERAN (AZ-01)
Co-Chair for Communications
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REP. KURT SCHRADER (OR-05)
Co-Chair
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