

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Members of the Florida Delegation, we write with urgency to express concern about the evolving conditions in Florida due to the outbreak of COVID-19 (“Coronavirus”) and to request Florida’s prioritization to receive immediate, emergency resources to aggressively mitigate and contain the spread of the virus in our State. Florida has recently been placed under a state of emergency as the number of confirmed cases of the Coronavirus has already grown since the initial announcement last week, and will likely continue to grow given Florida’s role as a significant port of entry, contact with the virus through shared spaces and those who are asymptomatic, in addition to other means by which the virus can spread.

The World Health Organization cautions that older populations and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma and heart conditions are more susceptible to becoming severely ill once they have contracted the Coronavirus.^[1] Florida’s population is estimated to be made up of 20 percent of individuals aged 65 and over, higher than the estimated 16 percent nation-wide, and 28 percent of Florida’s nonelderly population have pre-existing conditions, slightly higher than the national percentage.^[2] Additionally, we represent a diverse state of rural, minority and indigenous, impoverished, and numerous other historically underserved communities that will require access to resources and medical infrastructure that are not currently available and will be needed to mitigate the spread of the virus to other parts of the State and the country.

Congress has moved rapidly to provide the Administration with over \$8 billion to address the outbreak of the Coronavirus. This funding is central to the medical response that will need to be initiated in Florida as doctors, nurses, and their teams continue to work on the front lines of this outbreak. Such an aggressive response must include the ability for all communities to have adequate access to testing for this disease to guide responses and assist in any mitigation or containment strategies, coordinated among various federal entities such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the National Institute of Health (NIH), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and local agencies. These strategies will be strengthened by

proactive and transparent communication from the CDC and the Coronavirus Taskforce to the States, so that local healthcare systems can take the appropriate steps to control any further spread of the disease and must remain a top priority as the outbreak evolves.

With this in mind, we believe the Administration and the Taskforce can take several actions to improve the response to the Coronavirus outbreak in Florida. Nursing homes and other sites that care for our senior constituents should be provided with specific guidelines to protect residents who are particularly vulnerable and to safeguard staff and health providers. Additionally, same-day test kits need to be circulated to as many testing sites as possible to limit the spread of the disease through contact. Finally, the federal government needs to work closely with Governor DeSantis to ensure that Florida is fully reimbursed for their expenses to combat the virus to date and develop an action plan to help protect our unique, tourism-driven economy as State officials continue to fight the disease on multiple fronts. We are ready to help your Administration and the Taskforce provide leadership, resources, and information to our constituents during this critical time.

We respectfully ask for your full consideration of our requests and immediate assistance from federal entities including the CDC, NIH, and HHS to our local healthcare systems. We thank you for your attention to this critically urgent matter and look forward to a prompt response.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Francis Rooney
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Val B. Demings
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Ross Spano
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress

D.E. Shalala

Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress

Brian Mast

Brian Mast
Member of Congress

W. Gregory Steube

W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress

Michael Waltz

Michael Waltz
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

John H. Rutherford

John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress