

American Support for World Health Organization Funding

As the United States and the world confront an unprecedented global health crisis, it has never been more urgent to ensure that the World Health Organization (WHO), the primary institution with the technical capacity and mandate to support all countries at this critical time, has the resources it needs for urgent, front-line response. WHO's essential work on COVID-19 is in American interests and the world's interests and needs our fullest support.

The Better World Campaign strongly urges the administration to resume funding for WHO. But don't take our word for it. Here is what others are saying in support of the WHO.

What scientists and doctors are saying:

- *"The WHO helps to ensure that effective treatments and vaccines also spread quickly through international coordination and collaboration. This work cannot be interrupted and the Academy calls on Congress as well as leaders within the Trump Administration to divert from finalizing any measures that would take us down the path of terminating our country's important relationship with the WHO."* – [American Academy of Nursing](#)
- *"In the grip of a global pandemic that has already killed more than 100,000 Americans, severing ties with the World Health Organization (WHO) serves no logical purpose and makes finding a way out of this public health crisis dramatically more challenging. This senseless action will have significant, harmful repercussions now and far beyond this perilous moment, particularly as the WHO is leading worldwide vaccine development and drug trials to combat the pandemic... In the strongest terms possible, the American Medical Association urges the president to reverse course and not abandon our country's leadership position in the global fight against COVID-19."* – [American Medical Association](#)
- *"Withdrawing support from the WHO not only harms the global response against COVID-19 and prevents the United States from engaging the agency to enact meaningful reforms, but undermines the response to other major health threats impacting children. The American Academy of Pediatrics urges the administration to reconsider its position and continue to work with the WHO to combat COVID-19 and promote the health of children globally."* – [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- *"The World Health Organization's role in providing assistance, setting health standards, and collecting data are instrumental in the global fight against disease... FAS therefore urges the administration to rethink this decision and to join global partners to end the pandemic."* – [Federation of American Scientists](#)
- *"As infectious diseases physicians on the front line of combating the current global crisis we stand strongly against President Trump's decision to leave the World Health Organization. We will not succeed against this pandemic or any future outbreak, unless we stand together, share information, and coordinate actions."* – [Infectious Diseases Society of America](#)
- *"It is critical for the U.S. to continue its funding for the World Health Organization in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic given the WHO's lead role in coordinating an international response, especially in developing countries. The WHO's leadership in helping to curb the pandemic in other countries undoubtedly benefits the United States as well, as we cannot begin to fully recover here until the threat of the pandemic subsides in other nations. Even a temporary halt in U.S. funding would have a potentially damaging impact on the WHO's essential activities and global health security."* – [National Academy of Medicine](#)
- *"They are an imperfect organization, they have made mistakes. but I would like to see the mistakes corrected and be much more in line with things we need There are some very good people at WHO, including the Director-General that I know well. I hope this tension between the U.S. and WHO ultimately gets resolved. The world does need a WHO for outbreaks like this, and for the general health of the globe to coordinate it."* – [Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#)

- *"Hampering the WHO now means that even more people will die around the world during this pandemic."* – [Dr. Ashish K. Jha, Director of the Harvard Global Health Institute](#)
- *"We helped create the W.H.O...Turning our back on the W.H.O. makes us and the world less safe."* – [Dr. Thomas Frieden, former Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(2009-17\)](#)
- *"It's not a failed bureaucracy. If you go there and see all they do every year, and they have a budget for the entire world that's smaller than many medical centers in this country."* – [Dr. William Foege, former Director, CDC \(1977–1983\)](#)
- *"If we pull out of the World Health Organization, we're going to be flying blind in terms of influenza and other pandemic threats. It's going to be a lot harder to know what's going on."* – [Dr. Nancy Cox, former Director, CDC Influenza Division, and former Director, CDC's WHO Collaborating Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology and Control of Influenza](#)
- *"I can state with certainty that the Trump administration's notification to Congress and the United Nations that the US will formally withdraw its membership from the WHO fundamentally threatens the safety of the United States and other countries. It is the public health equivalent of shooting your allies during battle."* – [Dr. Keiji Fukuda, Director of the School of Public Health, University of Hong Kong and former Assistant Director-General for Health Security, WHO](#)

What the non-profit sector is saying:

- *"The Chamber supports a reformed but functional World Health Organization, and U.S. leadership and involvement are essential to ensuring its transparency and accountability going forward. However, cutting the WHO's funding during the COVID-19 pandemic is not in U.S. interests given the organization's critical role assisting other countries — particularly in the developing world — in their response."* – [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)
- *"WHO provides critical leadership, expertise, and resources to countries around the world who may not otherwise have the tools to protect the health of their citizens. We must condemn this move to withdraw support to an organization which provides life-saving aid to so many. Additionally, we must insist the administration reconsider its position."* – [Global Health Council](#)
- *"Ending America's relationship with the World Health Organization simply doesn't make sense in the midst of a global pandemic, especially when the WHO operates where no one else is, in fragile health systems around the world. This is a deadly virus that will certainly come back to our shores."* – [U.S. Global Leadership Coalition](#)
- *"To protect us all and combat this deadly virus, America must undertake a global response that uses all the tools available. The WHO cannot simply be replaced and cutting off U.S. funding makes the world and America less safe as we face a range of global health threat."* – [Interaction](#)
- *"The WHO, albeit imperfect, is the best tool the world has to put out this blaze. Severing America's decades-long relationship with the WHO during a four-alarm fire will only make Americans less safe and more vulnerable to a resurgence of this pandemic."* – [ONE Campaign](#)
- *"As a Christian humanitarian organization motivated by our faith to help the most vulnerable around the world, World Vision is concerned with how a halt in funds to the WHO could impact the children we serve. The WHO's leadership in global health goes beyond pandemics and funding cuts could stop progress being made to address diseases like polio, malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis – diseases that kill millions of children every year... Without the WHO's expertise and technical leadership, we are at great risk of losing critical ground in eradicating diseases like polio and making the U.S. government's own programs less effective."* – [World Vision](#)
- *"We stand with the WHO, an institution that has been helping build stronger health systems and promoting human rights across the globe for decades. Since January, the WHO has played a key role in coordinating the global fight against COVID-19. The WHO has been an important source of information on COVID-19, issuing guidance and warnings to countries and conducting research to find lifesaving treatments to ensure that a national patchwork of responses becomes more*

than just the sum of its parts. Furthermore, the WHO provides critical technical and capacity support to fragile healthcare systems across the world.” – [American Jewish World Service](#)

What the diplomatic community is saying:

- “We are using WHO to run an anti-polio campaign and coordinate it. And we’re almost there. We can’t stop that now.” – [Andrew Natsios, former Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development \(2001-2006\)](#)
- “People coming into countries in WHO shirts to work on polio or AIDS are less threatening. It is easier to get collaboration from a skeptical country or population through WHO. It facilitates access...No one is looking for U.S.-based alternatives to WHO. Dead on arrival. There is no way they are going to be supported or even accepted.” – [Ambassador Jimmy Kolker, veteran health diplomat who represented the U.S. at WHO meetings until 2017](#)
- “If for no other reason, the fact that we can provide support to WHO, who will provide health care professionals and assistance in places where we don’t want to put Americans because it’s unsafe or insecure — that’s in our interest. And so we need a strong WHO. Can we boost it? Yes.” – [Mark Green, former Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development \(2017-2020\)](#)
- “As part of our international response, we must drive more reform and accountability at the World Health Organization. But it is a mistake to halt U.S. funding and end our relationship with the WHO, given its unique capabilities to support weak and fragile health systems in the developing world. We were pleased to see lawmakers on both sides of the aisle speak up on why the WHO is an essential player in the midst of a pandemic.” – [Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State \(1997-2001\)](#) and [Stephen Hadley, former National Security Advisor \(2005-2009\)](#)