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January 29, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

I write to you today to urge you to take action to inhibit the spread of the Wuhan coronavirus, which at this time has infected more than 6,000, killed more than 100, and spread across three continents.

Unfortunately, these numbers merely represent what we currently know about the virus, when in reality the statistics may be much worse. As China did with the SARS virus epidemic in 2002 and 2003, which killed nearly 800 people worldwide and infected more than 8,000, Chinese authorities once again have suppressed information regarding the Wuhan coronavirus on Chinese social media channels and in the international community, downplaying the numbers of infected and admitting the severity of the contagion only after being forced to recognize that human-to-human transmission of the disease was possible. Therefore, I would caution you and your department against taking the official statistics and calls for “openness and transparency” from the Chinese Communist Party as truthful or sincere, given the Party’s abysmal record on conveying information to the global community that could threaten its power or international image.

As of last night, some 200 Americans were evacuated from mainland China after passing initial health screenings and made it safely to Alaska, where they were screened by technicians from U.S. Centers for Disease Control. I have complete confidence in America’s doctors and scientists and know that we are doing all we can to produce an effective vaccine, but I urge you to be proactive in your efforts to stop the spread of this disease. In addition to screening all travelers from the People’s Republic of China, I hope you emulate Australia and the U.K. in mandating a two-week quarantine for individuals who could have been exposed to the coronavirus, and consider banning entry to the U.S. to those traveling from China.

When the safety of our citizens is threatened by the possibility of a global epidemic, no options for prevention can be left off the table. It is crucial that we work effectively and ardently both with our allies internationally and within our own country to prevent the rapid spread of this virus.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and your vigilant endeavors to protect the American people and global health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Babin, D.D.S." The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" being the most prominent.

Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo