March 4, 2020

U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Republican Leadership,

There is an urgency for the American people for Congress to act swiftly and in a bipartisan way to pass the coronavirus emergency supplemental appropriation bill. We understand that many Democrats are trying to interject partisan language that would impose government oversight of product pricing, in other words price controls, on the commercial price of any vaccines, therapeutics, or diagnostics developed from the funds provided by the legislation.

This is unprecedented and unacceptable. At a time when the United States needs the world’s most innovative pharmaceutical industry to develop a treatment and potential cure for the coronavirus, it appears the Democrats are playing politics with the lives of the American people and anyone else who would benefit from these new drugs. This provision would be a major disincentive for any company to perform the necessary research and development to address this new disease.

This type of price control was not in any legislation related to any of the diseases related to the coronavirus like MERS, SARS, and the swine flu, the latter of which caused 12,000 deaths in the United States in 2009.

There is only one reason why this language is being proposed for the supplemental appropriation: Democrats are trying to take advantage of a crisis to give the government more control over healthcare.

As you know, there is no guarantee that an individual company’s research and development will result in a drug that is safe and effective. If a company knows that it may not get back its investment on that drug when it is sold, it may not even begin the research.

We are asking that you convey your strong opposition to any price controls that are being considered for the emergency supplemental appropriation. No one should be playing politics with the lives of the American people.

Sincerely,

Thomas Schatz