

United States Senate

May 5, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

I write today in response to reports that you are considering disbanding the White House Coronavirus Task Force. I urge you not to do that. Ending the Task Force's work prematurely, while the country faces increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths, and significant challenges responding to the pandemic, could have catastrophic consequences. Now more than ever, the highest levels of our government need the advice and recommendations of public health officials. We must not lose their valuable insight at this precarious time.

Our nation is not yet ready to beginning deescalating in the war against coronavirus.¹ First, we do not yet have the level of testing or personal protective equipment (PPE) the country needs. Second, we lack adequate protection for frontline workers—from doctors and nurses, to fire fighters and grocery store workers. Third, we do not have a strategy for the production and distribution of an eventual vaccine or therapeutic treatment. Despite this, news reports suggest that you are considering ending the Task Force within the month.² That would be a mistake.

The Task Force should continue to meet to consider and address the questions that remain as this pandemic rages. When the Task Force has news or decisions to report, its members should do so, themselves. The American people need to know that the nation's top public health experts, whom they trust, are on the job. They need to hear directly from them, free of political talking points that dilute crucial messaging, inflame political passions, and dissuade individuals from heeding important medical and public health guidance.

¹ Juan Perez Jr. & David Cohen, *Backlash to the backlash: Governors, medical officials wary of rush to reopen*, Politico (May 4, 2020), <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/03/coronavirus-governors-reopen-231624>.

² Katherine Faulders & Jordyn Phelps, *White House to wind down coronavirus task force as Trump shifts focus to reopening country*, ABC News (May 5, 2020), <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/white-house-wind-coronavirus-task-force-trump-shifts/story?id=70518706>.

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Page 2 of 2

Ending too soon the work of the one centralized team of public health experts in this Administration will only serve to slow down and complicate our response to the coronavirus pandemic, and ultimately cost American lives. That should not and must not happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator