



August 21, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC, 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

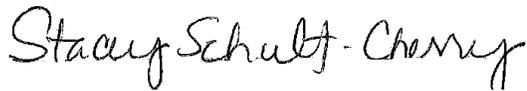
The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) urges you to set aside partisan differences and act quickly to pass a relief package to address the continued challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. ASM is a global society dedicated to the advancement of the microbial sciences and is composed of 30,000 scientists and health practitioners. Thousands of ASM's members are on the front lines of the fight against SARS-COV-2, most especially our members who direct and work in clinical microbiology laboratories and hospital settings around the country. We also represent many thousands of members engaged in ground-breaking and essential research whose work has been disrupted, or curtailed, as a result of the pandemic.

In the next negotiated COVID-19 relief legislation, ASM calls on Congress to include the following provisions:

- At least \$75 billion for testing and contact tracing as proposed in H.R. 6800 and passed by the House in May, in addition to supplemental emergency funding for the public health agencies to assist states and localities with their response;
- At least \$15.5 billion in emergency funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as proposed by the Senate Coronavirus Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act and an additional \$11 billion in supplemental funding for other federal research agencies, to mitigate the negative scientific and economic effects of the COVID-19-related laboratory closures and disruptions on research already in progress. Emergency funding for research supported by the NIH and other agencies will maximize our nation's capacity to address the current pandemic, take steps to prevent a recurrence of COVID-19 or the emergence of future pandemics. This funding is also needed to sustain momentum for scientific and medical advancements related to a myriad of existing health threats facing Americans on a daily basis, such as antimicrobial resistance.
- \$29 billion for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness Response, including support for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) and funding for materiel, including diagnostics, for the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) as proposed by the Senate. Testing kits and ancillary supply shortages have plagued laboratories over the course of the pandemic, and greater transparency is needed regarding resource allocation decisions.

Congress took swift action earlier this year to pass the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery and Economic Security Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act to address the crucial, evolving needs of the country. We call on you to work with a renewed sense of urgency to provide the additional support needed as the pandemic continues. ASM and its members stand ready to assist you. For questions, please contact Allen Segal, ASM Director of Policy and Advocacy, at asegal@asmusa.org or 202-942-9294.

Sincerely,



Stacey Schultz-Cherry, Ph.D.
Chair, Public and Scientific Affairs Committee
American Society for Microbiology



Stefano Bertuzzi, Ph.D., MPH
CEO
American Society for Microbiology