

Durbin, Booker, Introduce Bill To Reverse Trump Withdrawal From World Health Organization

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) introduced a bill to ensure the United States fulfills its commitments to the World Health Organization (WHO). Under the Abiding by U.S. Commitments Act, the United States will continue payments of its dues to the WHO and the other international organizations of which it is a member.

Earlier this year, the White House announced it would begin the process of terminating the United States' relationship with the World Health Organization, isolating the United States in the midst of a global pandemic and endangering access to up to date information about COVID-19 and other diseases. Last week, the Trump Administration also announced it would not [join 172 countries](#) in an effort to secure a safe vaccine simply because the World Health Organization was involved. These reckless actions amid a devastating pandemic severely undermine the global efforts to secure a vaccine and the U.S.'s historic leadership in global health diplomacy. The Trump Administration continues to risk millions of American lives simply to divert attention from its own failures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to recent reports, COVID-19 [has killed U.S. citizens](#) at six times the average rate in high-income countries and has recorded eight times the number of infections of other high-income countries.

“With the United States leading in the number of COVID-19 infections, we do not have time to play along with the President’s political stunt to withdraw from vital international organizations like the World Health Organization, which is leading a global effort to find and distribute a vaccine for a disease responsible for the death of more than 190,000 Americans,” said Durbin. “With this legislation, we are taking steps to reaffirm our commitment to our global allies in fighting this virus. After all, while I hope a vaccine is developed here, we don’t want the American people left out if one is developed abroad.”

“COVID-19 is a global pandemic that requires a coordinate global response, but because of the Trump Administration, the United States has not only lost more of our citizens to this virus than other high income countries but is almost entirely missing from international efforts to contain and stop the spread of this virus,” said Booker. “Congress needs to act urgently to ensure that the U.S. keeps its commitments to our international partners like the WHO so that they can continue to coordinate the global response to COVID-19 and work to save lives here at home and abroad.”

Specifically, this legislation:

- Expresses a Sense of Congress that the U.S. should participate in global efforts to develop a vaccine for COVID-19, including the COVAX facility.
- Requires the Secretary of State to pay 2020 assessed dues to the International Organizations to which the U.S. belongs.

- Requires that \$118.9 million be made available to the WHO as this is the U.S. annual assessed/treaty obligated dues.

This bill comes on the heels of a July [letter](#) Durbin and Booker led with 32 of their Senate colleagues urging the President to reverse his decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization and the passage of [Durbin's resolution](#) reaffirming the United States' role in the global effort to find and distribute a COVID-19 vaccine in June.

In addition to Durbin and Booker, the bill is cosponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jack Reed (D-RI), and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).