

# United States Senate

November 17, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell, Chairman Reed, and Ranking Member Inhofe:

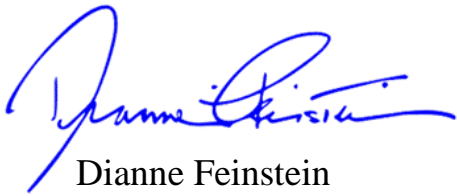
As the Senate Armed Services Committee finalizes its version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, we respectfully request that you include our bipartisan “National Commission on the COVID–19 Pandemic Act” in its final passage. This important legislation would establish a 9/11-style commission so that we can better understand the vulnerabilities COVID-19 has revealed in our health care system and improve our overall preparedness for future public health crises.

To date, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused more than 763,000 deaths in the United States, and at least 47 million people have now been infected. While we are still recovering from the current pandemic, we are faced with the threat that a new virus will emerge with even greater lethality. It is imperative that we do everything possible now to ensure the human and economic catastrophe we’ve experienced never happens again.

Modeled after the 9/11 Commission, our bill’s commission would conduct a comprehensive investigation of the COVID-19 outbreak and identify lessons learned regarding U.S. preparedness, response, and recovery. These efforts are meant to complement ongoing oversight efforts in Congress and the Administration, maximizing our capacity to reflect on this unique moment in our history and making use of every tool at our disposal.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been the deadliest viral outbreak in more than a century, a recent study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that novel disease outbreaks are actually becoming more common, and the risk of occurrence is likely to increase three-fold in the next few decades. It is crucial that we work together now, without delay, to make our country safer by establishing this Commission, so that we are fully prepared for the potential of a larger pandemic in the near future. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



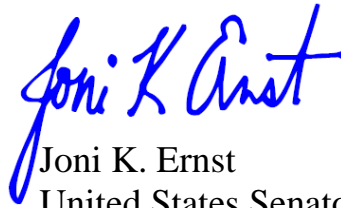
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator