March 2, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500-0005

Dear Mr. President:

Recent news reports indicate the Administration is poised to request an additional $30 billion from Congress for its response to COVID-19. While we have supported historic, bipartisan measures in the United States Senate to provide unprecedented investments in vaccines, therapeutics, and testing, it is not yet clear why additional funding is needed.

Since March 2020, the federal government has borrowed trillions of dollars to combat the virus and provide relief to families and businesses. By March 11, 2021, the day you signed the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act into law, Congress had already approved over $3.8 trillion in COVID-19 relief. All told, the nearly $6 trillion in spending on COVID-19 is the single greatest expenditure of public funds on one effort in the history of the nation.

However, since passage of the American Rescue Plan in February, questions are mounting about where exactly the additional money has gone.

A recent investigative report from the Washington Post headlined, “‘Immense fraud’ creates immense task for Washington as it tries to tighten scrutiny of $6 trillion in emergency coronavirus spending” details the federal government’s shocking failure to provide the American public with a faithful accounting of how it has spent its money.

“Nearly two years later, however, the stimulus data is voluminous yet vexing — for the public and the government alike. The spending portal does not offer a real-time, detailed view as to the way cities, states, schools, hospitals and others actually have deployed broad swaths of the cash they received. In education, for example, federal records show more than $81 billion set aside for school districts in response to the pandemic. Yet the information is 90 days old in some cases and offers no insight as to what those communities actually did once they obtained the grants.”

“By 2021, Biden’s top aides intensified the work to improve the oversight process, particularly after the passage of the American Rescue Plan last March. Yet the efforts failed to satisfy lawmakers, federal watchdogs, health professionals and ethics experts, a dozen of whom said in interviews that they have struggled to answer the most basic questions — including how much money has been spent, and how, in critical areas such as testing.” (emphasis added)
Before we would consider supporting an additional $30 billion for COVID-19 relief, Congress must receive a full accounting of how the government has already spent the first $6 trillion.

In an effort to better understand your reported request for supplemental appropriations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we respectfully ask the Administration to answer the following questions:

1. When does the Administration plan to request an additional $30 billion in COVID-19 relief funding, and if it does so, what would be the purpose of the request?

2. As of March 3, 2022, how much of the funding made available under the American Rescue Plan remains unspent, unobligated, or undisbursed?

3. As of March 3, 2022, how much of the funding under the American Rescue Plan has been obligated, but not disbursed for more than 6 months?

4. How much money has the government spent to date on vaccines and testing? Please provide a specific list of these expenditures and accompanying metrics used to evaluate their effectiveness.

5. Of the $350 billion made available under the American Rescue Plan to state and local governments, how much has been used to date for vaccines and testing? Please provide a specific list of these expenditures and accompanying metrics used to evaluate their effectiveness.

6. Does the Administration have plans to make available real-time data about all COVID-19 spending to the public?

We strongly believe Americans should continue to take precautionary measures to protect against the pandemic, and it must be an urgent priority that the trillions of taxpayer dollars already appropriated are being spent effectively.

Sincerely,

Mitt Romney
United States Senator

Mike Crapo
United States Senator
Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator

Rob Portman  
United States Senator

John Boozman  
United States Senator

Pat Toomey  
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator

Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator

John Thune  
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator

James E. Risch  
United States Senator
Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator

Mitch McConnell  
United States Senator

Tommy Tuberville  
United States Senator

Ted Cruz  
United States Senator

Roger Wicker  
United States Senator

Josh Hawley  
United States Senator

Ron Johnson  
United States Senator

Mike Braun  
United States Senator

John Cornyn  
United States Senator

Cynthia M. Lummis  
United States Senator
Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator

Tim Scott  
United States Senator

Richard Shelby  
United States Senator

Tom Cotton  
United States Senator