

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

I write to you today about the continued spread of the Wuhan coronavirus, which has now arrived on American soil.

Once again, a deadly virus is emanating from the People's Republic of China. The Wuhan coronavirus has infected hundreds of people in China, killing at least seventeen individuals so far. The disease has now spread to Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, and South Korea. At least one case has been confirmed in the United States. I'm confident that the United States Government is undertaking all possible measures to contain the spread of the disease, but I'm deeply concerned that waging an efficient and successful campaign against this virus depends on the trustworthiness and transparency of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), an organization with a horrendous history in these matters.

As you know, in the past the CCP has lied, falsified statistics, and suppressed information about the outbreak of disease in order to protect its political standing and cover for its own incompetence. In 2002 and 2003, the SARS virus killed nearly 800 people and infected over 8,000 worldwide after the CCP denied there was even a health crisis. During the outbreak, CCP officials imposed a months-long blackout on media coverage of the disease. The CCP, with its totalitarian Marxist-Leninist ideology, reflexively covers up scandals that could threaten its power.

For these reasons, the CCP's calls for transparency about the spread of the Wuhan coronavirus are deeply suspect. I urge the Department of Health and Human Services to carefully vet any information being passed from its contacts in Beijing. If you have reason to believe that U.S. officials are being provided with false or misleading information about the disease from Chinese government officials, I ask that you notify Congress immediately.

Moreover, given China's dismal record on these matters, your Department and all relevant agencies of the U.S. Government must be proactive in planning for scenarios where this infection continues to spread. Measures such as screening all travelers from the People's Republic of China and, if necessary, banning entry to those traveling from China must be contemplated and prepared in order to keep Americans safe.

It is imperative that the United States, China, and other relevant governments and international bodies cooperate to prevent this virus from becoming a pandemic. This cooperation must be conducted on the basis of facts, not the CCP's political fiction.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton
United States Senator