

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 5, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Jeff Zients
COVID-19 Coordinator
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500z

Dear President Biden and Mr. Zients,

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in a systematic, coordinated, and strategic way. We appreciate the immediate steps you have taken to increase vaccine allocations to states and ask that you consider an additional allocation immediately for the state of Arizona.

It has been brought to our attention that the Governor recently requested an infusion of 300,000 additional vaccine doses, followed with an additional 300,000 per week to Arizona. We support this request and ask that several unique conditions in Arizona be considered in approving the state's request. Arizona has one of the fastest growing populations in the nation, with high transitional and seasonal populations. During winter months many part-time residents, that are not accounted for in population totals, but are likely seeking vaccines in our communities, live in Arizona. The border region includes a large seasonal workforce that must be immunized to carry out essential duties, including those critical to the nation's food supply.

Additionally, while we respect a pro rata apportionment of vaccines by population, we ask that you consider whether it is appropriate to supply hotspots with an immediate influx of additional vaccines to save the most lives. In early January Arizona had been deemed "the hotspot in the world" for COVID-19, reporting the highest rate of new coronavirus cases in the United States, leading in hospitalizations, and reporting above average death rates¹. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) projections show Arizona hospitals remaining under "extreme to high stress" through at least March. Additionally, Arizona has a large minority and elderly population which are suffering disproportionately from COVID, and therefore an enhanced federal response should be considered.

We are concerned that Arizona is failing to release appropriate data on age, race and ethnicity of those vaccinated, and that technological barriers are not being addressed and are disproportionately impacting low-income, minority and rural communities. Our offices have received reports from multiple counties of week-over-week of reductions in vaccine allotments. For example, Pima county was informed this week's allocation would decrease from the 29,850 to 17,850, despite having appointments scheduled for all existing doses. We receive regular calls

¹ <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html>

from constituents regarding confusion and malfunctioning with registration portals. The Arizona Department of Health Services vaccine registration does not provide an option to register in Spanish, effectively excluding individuals that may otherwise be eligible. We ask that the COVID task force take an active role in assessing problems with the state's operations and actively work to provide oversight to ensure Arizona is effectively adopting federal guidance for equitable distribution of vaccinations. We ask the federal response include staffing, infrastructure, and logistical support to compensate for shortcomings of the state response, particularly in rural and hard to reach areas.

We understand that there have been many failures at the state level to embrace and implement policies to effectively control the virus. The crisis the state is facing is not a failure of the current administration, but on behalf of our constituents we are seeking additional support to get out of this crisis as quickly as possible and save lives. We will continue to support more responsible mitigation activities throughout the state and ask that you consider our unique request for additional vaccinations and support.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress