

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2020

Dr. Francis S. Collins, M.D. PhD
Director, National Institutes of Health
Building 1, One Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-0160

Dear Director Collins,

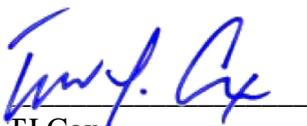
We are writing to thank you for the progress that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has made in supporting research related to COVID-19. Congress has provided new sources of funding for biomedical researchers investigating therapeutic treatments and vaccines for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and the NIH is supporting investigators whose research will lead to lifesaving treatments and cures for COVID-19, as well as myriad other disease states that impact Americans every single day.

Specifically, we are writing to encourage you to prioritize and invest in research that focuses on infection rates and transmission dynamics among populations that are in essential designated professions, typically hard-to-reach and may have increased risk factors. Farmers, farmworkers and employees of food processing plants are on the front lines everyday ensuring that products can get to market and that grocery store shelves remain stocked during this crisis.

Farmworkers constitute an essential workforce. Yet, we have heard reports that they face difficulties being able to socially distance at the farms they work at, during transportation, and in housing. Many already suffer from existing health disparities and access to care.

For the reasons above, we strongly encourage you to use funding to invest in testing studies that can assess, in real time, disease transmission among this population, as well as provide farmers and farmworkers with public health information and resources so that best management practices can be designed to ensure the safety of our workers and our food supply. Farmers, farmworkers and food processing workers together play a vital and indispensable role in providing fresh produce, dairy products, meat and many other foods to California, the nation, and to the world. We stand ready to continue to advocate for the federal resources necessary to support nation-wide and state-wide recovery strategies so that our communities remain able to protect and treat our most vulnerable, as we continue our efforts to defeat this virus. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or if you need additional information. We appreciate your consideration of this request and thank you again for your dedication to improving the lives and well-being of so many.

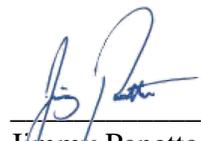
Sincerely,



TJ Cox
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress