

May 2, 2022

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

Dear Mr. President:

The flood of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the horror of Russia's brutal invasion reminds us that the pain of war falls most heavily on those with the least ability to defend themselves, especially children. The same is true of our battle with COVID-19, which has now left over 7 million children worldwide suffering from the death of a loving parent or grandparent caregiver. Urgent action is needed to support and protect these hidden victims of the pandemic.

COVID-19-associated orphanhood and caregiver loss are increasing at unparalleled speed, with one new child affected every 6 seconds. It took the HIV/AIDS pandemic 10 years for 5 million children to become orphaned; it's taken COVID-19 just two years to top that tragedy. Many of these children face extreme threats, including abuse, violence, and institutionalization.

The good news is that we know how to protect these children. The US is the global leader in supporting family-based care for orphaned and other vulnerable children through USAID programs and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which has turned peril into promise for millions of children orphaned by AIDS. We can do the same for children affected by COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the current global COVID-19 response framework fails to recognize the crisis of COVID orphanhood – despite the fact that “Save Lives Now” is one of its major pillars. As a result, billions of needed dollars are being spent to prevent COVID-19 deaths, but little is being done to support the children left behind. The US can change this dynamic.

We commend you for committing to support the more than 200,000 COVID-bereaved children in the US through the National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and the Presidential Memorandum on Addressing the Long-Term Effects of COVID-19. **We now urge you to use the May 12 Global COVID-19 Summit to call on *all* countries to follow your example and incorporate care for children affected by COVID-19-associated orphanhood and caregiver death into global, regional, and national response plans.** This will help mobilize the political will and global resources needed to aid these children.

The global crisis of COVID-19 orphanhood is a challenge to our conscience and a call to our ideals as a nation. We urge you to seize the opportunity the Summit presents to do what America does best – translate compassion into action.

Sincerely,

**COVID**  
Collaborative

**Philip Aspegren**

Executive Director, Casa Viva

**Georges Benjamin**

Executive Director, American Public Health Association

**John Bridgeland**

CEO, COVID Collaborative; Fmr. Director, White House Domestic Policy Council

**Larry Brilliant**

CEO, Pandefense Advisory; Senior Counselor, Skoll Foundation

**Sean Callahan**

President & CEO, Catholic Relief Services

**Mark Canavera**

Director, Care and Protection of Children (CPC) Learning Network in the Department of Population and Family Health in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University

**Rose Cardarelli**

CEO, Education for All Coalition

**Lucie Cluver**

Professor of Social Work, University of Oxford

**Chris Collins**

President & CEO, Friends of the Global Fight

**Melody Curtiss**

Executive Director, Helping Children Worldwide

**Christi Donnelly**

Professor of Applied Statistics, University of Oxford; Professor of Statistical Epidemiology, Imperial College London

**Mark Dybul**

Co-Director, Georgetown Center for Global Health & Impact; Fmr. Executive Director, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; Fmr. U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator

**Heather Dyer**

Executive Director, A Family for Every Orphan

**Gary Edson**

President, COVID Collaborative; Fmr. Deputy National Security Advisor and Deputy National Economic Advisor

**Ezekiel J. Emanuel**

Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, Perelman School of Medicine University of Pennsylvania; Fmr. Special Advisor on Health Policy, Office of Management and Budget and National Economic Council

**Seth Flaxman**

Senior Statistical Lead, University of Oxford, The Global Reference Group on Children Affected by COVID-19

**Julio Frenk**

President, University of Miami

**Karmen Friesen**

Principal Coordinator, World Without Orphans

**Mike Gallagher**

Founder & CEO, 1MILLIONHOME

**Monica Gandhi**

Professor of Medicine and Infectious Diseases, UCSF

**Helene Gayle**

President & CEO, Chicago Community Trust

**Bruce Gellin**

Chief of Global Public Health Strategy, The Rockefeller Foundation

**Amanda Glassman**

Executive Vice President & Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development; CEO CGD Europe

**Amy Goldman**

CEO & Chair, GHR Foundation

**Philip Goldman**

President, Maestral International

**Myal Greene**

President & CEO, World Relief

**Beth Guckenberger**

Co-Executive Director, Back2Back Ministries

**Ashlee Heiligman**

Global Director, Global Child Advocates

**Gillian Huebner**

Executive Director, Georgetown University  
Collaborative on Global Children's Issues

**Ruby M. Johnston**

Co-Founder, LAMb International (Global Capacity  
Building Network)

**Michael Leavitt**

Fmr. U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services;  
Fmr. Governor & U.S. Senator (R-UT)

**Bruce Lesley**

President, First Focus on Children

**Charles J. Lyons**

President & CEO, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS  
Foundation

**Gibstar Makangila**

Executive Director, Circle of Hope

**Mark McClellan**

Director, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy,  
Duke University; Fmr. Commissioner of the US  
Food and Drug Administration

**Jedd Medefind**

President, Christian Alliance for Orphans

**Michael Merson**

Wolfgang Joklik Professor of Global Health, Duke  
Global Health Institute, Duke University

**David Michaels**

Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health  
and Epidemiology, George Washington University  
School of Public Health

**Charles Nelson**

Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School  
and Boston Children's Hospital

**Michelle Nunn**

President & CEO, CARE USA

**Elli Oswald**

Executive Director, Faith to Action Initiative

**Carlos del Rio**

Professor, Emory University School of Medicine;  
International Secretary, National Academy of  
Medicine

**Mishelle Rudzinski**

Executive Director, SPOON

**Edgar Sandoval Sr.**

President & CEO, World Vision US

**Jared Scheppmann**

Executive Director, Ekisa Ministries International  
Inc.

**Mark Schwartz**

President, Both Ends Believing

**Kathleen Sebelius**

CEO, Sebelius Resources; Fmr. U.S. Secretary of  
Health & Human Services; Fmr. Governor (D-KS)

**Lorraine Sherr**

Health of Health Psychology Unit, Institute of  
Global Health, University College London

**Shelton Taguma**

Executive Director, Forgotten Voices

**Krishna Udayakumar**

Director, Duke Global Health Innovation Center,  
Duke University

**Michelle A. Williams**

Co-Founder, COVID Collaborative; Dean of the  
Faculty, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public  
Health

**Gautam N. Yadama**

Dean and Professor, Boston College School of  
Social Work