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The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader Jeffries
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Leader
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Katherine Clark
Minority Whip
H-148, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Democrat Leader Jeffries,

Infections without a cure are deadly to humans. Unfortunately, antibiotic and antifungal medications to treat infections are becoming scarce. If left unchecked, the costs to the government and U.S. healthcare will be substantial.

On April 27, 2023, U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Todd Young (R-Ind.), along with U.S. Representatives Drew Ferguson (R-GA-3), Scott Peters (D-CA-50), Jake LaTurner (R-KS-2) and Mike Levin (D-CA-49) reintroduced the Pioneering Antimicrobial Subscriptions to End Upsurging Resistance (PASTEUR) Act to encourage innovative drug development targeting the most threatening infections, improve the appropriate use of antibiotics, and ensure domestic availability of antibiotics when needed.

Despite the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and widespread recognition of the need for action, some in Congress have raised the cost of the PASTEUR Act as a barrier to advancing this policy. While the funding within the bill will ultimately be necessary to ensure an ongoing, sustainable and robust antimicrobial R&D pipeline for patients in the U.S., the sponsors of the bill feel that authorizing the bill without funding attached is the right first step for this issue. Further, removing authorized funding in the bill allows the sponsors and supporters of the effort to discuss funding associated with the bill while abiding by regular order and respecting the prerogative of the Appropriations Committee.

We feel these steps are important for the issue to succeed at the present time. In order to achieve our goal, however, the authorizing language must be passed by Congress and signed by the President.

In the US alone, antimicrobial-resistant infections contributed to nearly 173,000 deaths in 2019. This same year, antibiotic-resistant "superbug" infections were involved in the deaths of nearly 5 million people across the globe. So many modern medical advances—cancer chemotherapy, hip and knee replacements, cesarian sections, organ transplants and more—carry a significant risk of infection and rely on the availability of safe and effective antimicrobials, which are in increasingly short supply. Just 6 of the worst resistant pathogens cost the US health care system \$4.6 billion annually, with about \$2 billion borne by Medicare. Transformative action on AMR is essential to save lives, reduce health care costs and maintain the standard of healthcare Americans deserve.

With these thoughts and data points in mind, we strongly believe that this zero-dollar authorization of the PASTEUR Act is the proper step for the moment, in an effort to work with Congress constructively and take a giant step forward in our country's long battle against the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance.

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