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Thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding the proposed amendments to the WHO's International Health Regulations. I appreciate hearing your views on this issue and welcome the opportunity to respond.

The 75th World Health Assembly will meet in 2022 to vote on certain amendments. There has been some misinformation on the nature of these amendments. At the urging of Republican Foreign Affairs Committee Leadership, these amendments would push back on China's control of the WHO and were, in part, recommended by a House Republican report on the origins of COVID. The amendments were originally developed under the Trump Administration.

Two years ago, the WHO failed in its stated mission to prevent pandemics, in large part due to the influence of the Chinese Communist Party within the organization. As a result, Trump was right to withhold funding of the WHO unless severe reforms were made. Early in the pandemic, China hid evidence of the outbreak and the WHO was complicit. Taiwan even warned the WHO of human-to-human transmission of the virus but the WHO ignored Taiwan because China blocks the WHO from recognizing Taiwan as a member. This is why I have fought for Taiwan's inclusion in international organizations, including the WHO. The organization needs reform and one step is ensuring that partners like Taiwan that saw the COVID outbreak coming get a seat at the table.

The proposed changes to the International Health Regulation (IHRs) would allow for timely and transparent release of critical information when dangerous pathogens are identified, or a global health threat emerges. The changes would protect member states from bad actors like China who seek to obfuscate health incidences within their borders. Under the current rules, during the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan province, the Chinese Communist Party was able to dictate what information was released by the WHO. We cannot allow rogue regimes and authoritarian leaders to hide critical health data, particularly where a lack of such data would threaten the lives of Americans, as well as U.S. national security and the U.S. economy. I view transparency in infectious disease outbreak to only make it easier to identify these problems early, and help rebuild trust for the WHO after their actions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The amendment does not, in any way, change or supersede U.S. law and the sovereign right for the United States to, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, to legislate and to implement legislation in pursuance of their health regulations.

As your Congressman, I take my oversight responsibilities very seriously. Each committee in the House has a specific oversight role of the Executive Branch, which is one of the very important functions of Congress. Please know that I am committed to working with all of my colleagues to do what is best for the American people.

Once again, thank you for contacting me on this important issue. Your input is an essential part of the decision-making process as I represent the interests of Utah. Please feel free to follow me on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram at @RepJohnCurtis for updates on my work in Congress. If you would like to receive regular updates on my work in Congress, please sign up for my newsletter at www.curtis.house.gov/subscribe.

Sincerely,



John Curtis
Member of Congress