



One Hundred Tenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On May 3, 2006, the Homeland Security Council (HSC) released the Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza. The Implementation Plan includes activities to be completed by various federal agencies within specified time periods. On December 18, 2006, the HSC released another report regarding the six-month completion status of these federal activities. To date, however, the HSC has yet to release an annual status report.

Continued delay in releasing this update suggests indifference by this Administration when it comes to dealing with the threat of emerging diseases, including pandemic influenza. The illnesses and deaths that continue to occur throughout the world from avian influenza indicate that we still have cause to worry. The recent deaths in Indonesia of a five year old girl on May 17th and a sixteen year old girl on May 29th illustrate this point, and indicate that avian influenza is still cause for concern.

I've seen how easily a disease can make its way across our borders. Just yesterday, witnesses from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Homeland Security testified before the House Homeland Security Committee about the federal response to the extensively drug resistant tuberculosis incident. It is clear from the way the situation was handled that we have more work to do. We must maintain our national and international preparedness efforts if we are to have any hope of responding to the devastating effects of the next pandemic. If focus in the United States wanes, we will be ill-equipped both here and abroad to combat this threat. Obviously, this has already happened with tuberculosis.

It is critical that the public and private sectors understand how far the government has come in preparing for the impact of pandemic influenza, and how much further it has to go. Had this Administration already completed a number of activities prescribed by

the Implementation Plan, the Federal government's response to the tuberculosis incident would have been better. For example, communication of health information regarding the patient and the disease he carried to our international colleagues would have occurred with greater alacrity; transporting the patient back to the U.S. also would have been safer and quicker.

Please release the annual status with all of the urgency that the exigent threat of pandemic influenza has created. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman