

May 18, 2020

Novartis Pharmaceuticals  
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Switzerland

To:

Vasant Narasimhan, M.D., Chief Executive Officer  
Tom Kendris, US Country President, President, Novartis Corporation, Global Head, Litigation  
Courtney Piron, Vice President and Head, North America Public Affairs  
Dan Casserly, Vice President and U.S. Country Head Government Affairs  
Elizabeth McGee, General Counsel  
Joerg Reinhardt, Ph.D., Chairman, Board of Directors

We are writing to urge that you cease your association with, and end your funding of, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which is leading an effort to lobby government officials—including President Trump—to ignore public health officials and discontinue mitigation measures before the COVID-19 outbreak is under control. ALEC's work in this effort, which your company is funding through its support of ALEC, poses a serious threat to the health and safety of all of us.

Recently, ALEC teamed up with a coalition of far-right lobbying groups to launch the "Save Our Country" campaign protesting the public health quarantine orders put in place to reduce the health risks of COVID-19. As *The Washington Post* recently reported, the ALEC-led coalition's focus is on "pushing for the White House and GOP lawmakers to push back against health professionals who have urged more caution."

Among health professionals, the consensus is clear on the risks of rolling back protective measures too early. As a prominent epidemiologist from Columbia University put it, "The math is unfortunately pretty simple. It's not a matter of whether infections will increase but by how much." Dr. Anthony Fauci, the leading infectious-disease expert at the National Institutes of Health, has warned that "unless we get the virus under control, the real recovery economically is not going to happen." Prematurely moving to lift public-safety regulations poses a clear threat to public health.

ALEC's own partner organizations, such as the Convention of States and FreedomWorks, are organizing and promoting dangerous protests in a variety of states in direct violation of public health orders, which we know will lead to the increased spread of COVID-19. These organizations have previously sponsored ALEC conferences and have been active members of ALEC along with your company.

Make no mistake, your continued financial support of ALEC is an active endorsement of this dangerous effort. The money your company is contributing to ALEC is helping fund this campaign—one which is direct contravention of public health guidelines.

ALEC has a long and well-documented history of opposing what is in the interest of the public for the sake of profit. The organization's agenda has included limiting people's access to lifesaving healthcare, denying climate science and repealing environmental safeguards that keep our air and water safe and clean, restricting workers' right to safe working conditions, lobbying on behalf big tobacco corporations against commonsense public health interests, promoting laws that have led to more gun violence, privatizing social safety nets like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security—the list goes on.

ALEC pushes this dangerous agenda behind closed doors, skirting state gift and lobbying laws at lavish resorts where legislators and lobbyists conspire in secret to rig the rules of the game without the public's consent. Much like ALEC's anti-transparent operating style, it has also pushed anti-democratic laws that block Americans' right to vote and restrict voters' right to know who is funding political campaigns.

We, the undersigned organizations, work on a variety of issues and don't always agree on every policy, but are well aware of the suffering and anxiety many people are feeling because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of those who have gotten sick, are dealing with emergency family care issues, or have lost their job are members of our organizations. We understand the damage the COVID-19 crisis has caused to our communities and economy and support lifting public safety measures when it's safe, but now is not the time to rush a political agenda or jump to unfounded conclusions. To get through this crisis together, we must follow science and listen to public health experts instead of shutting them out of the conversation.

At this time of crisis, we are asking your company align its values with what's best for the health and safety of everyone, reject this dangerous political campaign that will only prolong this crisis and put us all at risk, and immediately cease all funding and sever all ties with ALEC.

Sincerely,

Adrian Dominican Sisters  
AFL-CIO  
African American Ministers In Action  
Alliance for Retired Americans  
Amalgamated Transit Union  
American Family Voices  
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Battleborn Progress  
Boston Common Asset Management  
Brave New Films  
Campaign for America's Future  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Common Ground  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Media and Democracy  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Centered Wealth  
Clean Yield Asset Management  
Common Cause

Communication Workers of America (CWA)  
Congregation of St. Joseph  
Courage California  
Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise  
Democracy 21  
Democracy Initiative  
Franciscan Action Network  
Free Press  
Free Speech For People  
Friends of the Earth  
Greenpeace USA  
Harrington Investments, Inc.  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, JPIC-USA  
In The Public Interest  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Jefferson County Teachers Association  
Malden Education Association  
Mercy Investment Services  
Missionary Oblates/OIP Trust  
Money Out Voters In  
Montana Environmental Information Center  
National Council of Urban Education Associations  
New Progressive Alliance  
NorthStar Asset Management, Inc  
People Demanding Action  
People For the American Way  
People's Action  
PolicyLink  
Progress Florida  
Progress Iowa  
Public Citizen  
Rise and Resist  
rootsaction.org  
Save Our State - Alaska  
Science and Environmental Health Network  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of the Presentation of Aberdeen SD  
Social Equity Group  
Stand UP to ALEC  
Teamsters Local 104 (Arizona)  
The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
The Wildfire Project  
True North Research  
UnChainDemocracy.org  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
UnKoch My Campus  
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press

Zevin Asset Management