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**Taiwan should be allowed to participate in health summit**

I am writing to provide an important update on an issue mentioned in the May 8 news article ("Taiwan pushes for inclusion in global health summit").

The World Health Organization (WHO) has yet to invite Taiwan to attend the upcoming 70th World Health Assembly (WHA) scheduled for May 22-31 in Geneva, Switzerland – the first time since 2009 that Taiwan has been excluded. This has the potential to affect public health and the well-being of the international community, since disease knows no political or physical boundaries.

The government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) has expressed deep regret over not being invited to attend. We believe that the WHO should not bow to political pressure. Denying Taiwan's participation not only ignores the health rights of Taiwan's people, but also causes a breach in the world health

system.

Since 1996, Taiwan has invested \$6 billion in medical and humanitarian aid efforts in more than 80 countries. Our rights and responsibilities within the international health system should not be curtailed because of politics. Taiwan's exclusion is counter-productive and creates a critical gap in the international health-care network.

The ROC government and people of Taiwan very much appreciate the outpouring of support from our friends in the United States, Canada, Japan, and many other countries. In the United States, many have expressed concern and support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in the WHO and WHA. Taiwan's exclusion, after all, puts us all at risk. Let's safeguard global health together.

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