



# CITY OF HOUSTON

**Sylvester Turner**

Mayor

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November 23, 2020

The Honorable Gerald Connolly  
Chairman  
House Committee on Oversight and Reform  
Subcommittee on Government Operations  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Connolly,

As mayor of the fourth largest city in the United States, I write to you today asking that our federal government face reality.

First, on November 7, 2020, media outlets projected Joe Biden as winner of the 2020 presidential election and our president-elect. This was true on Saturday, November 7th, and it is true today. It will be true when history books record this chapter in American history. Every updated vote count and dismissed legal case since then has verified the results of this election. There is no confusion, doubt, or uncertainty in the outcome.

Second, the United States is experiencing a crisis of escalating infections of COVID-19. Earlier this fall, Dr. Anthony Fauci warned that our country could experience over 100,000 new, reported infections per day. The daily total today is almost double that previously unimaginable level. With holidays approaching, we are seeing increased positivity rates across the nation. My colleagues in El Paso are facing challenges in staffing mortuaries as casualties overwhelm the healthcare infrastructure.

Third, vaccine distribution is now the most important area of cooperation and coordination between local, state, and federal governments. In Houston, home of the Texas Medical Center – the largest medical complex in the Western Hemisphere – we are already in conversations about how to roll out vaccination plans with various hospital systems to protect our heroic healthcare workers.

These realities need to be faced, accepted, and addressed immediately.

Government Services Administration (GSA) Administrator Emily Murphy, a Trump political appointee, has not ascertained any apparent winner in the presidential election. She needs to face election reality. Her continued intransigence is simply dangerous. Vaccine distribution, even in the best of circumstances, is a difficult task – especially in Houston.

Deaths from COVID-19 have disproportionately affected vulnerable communities. As mayor of the largest city in America without Medicaid expansion, the highest uninsured rate and the most diverse population in the nation, the lives of Houstonians depend on government getting vaccine distribution right.

During my time as mayor, I have been cautious when navigating policy disagreements with the Trump Administration. In this instance, I believe the consequences of not coordinating with the incoming Biden Administration on vaccine distribution were best summed up on November 16th by the president-elect himself saying: "more people may die."

I urge you to take action, now. Houston is depending on you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner", written over the printed name.

Sylvester Turner  
Mayor