

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Arthur Sinodinos  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Australia  
1145 17th St NW  
Washington DC, 20036

Ambassador Sinodinos,

As Australia, along with the rest of the world, deals with the terrible human and economic consequences of COVID-19, we write to reaffirm our strong support for the U.S.-Australia alliance. For more than a century, our nations have stood side by side during moments of great peril. The current crisis is no different. Although the challenges we face are new, what has not changed is our shared commitment to our values and to our friends.

Given the tremendous toll COVID-19 has taken on the world, it is only natural that Australia – like all nations concerned with upholding best practices for global public health – would want an objective, scientific, evidence-based, and rigorous investigation into the origins of the virus. As Prime Minister Scott Morrison stated in calling for an independent review, “We’d like the world to be safer when it comes to viruses...I would hope that any other nation, be it China or anyone else, would share that objective.” Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong further emphasized that Australia must “press what is right, what we believe is right, for us and for the international community, and making sure that humanity understands how this virus started is the right thing to do.” We could not agree more.

Unfortunately, and not for the first time, Chinese government officials responded to these calls with deeply disturbing and thinly-disguised threats of retaliation. In an interview with the Australian Financial Review, Chinese Ambassador Cheng Jingye called such an inquiry “dangerous” and threatened economic retaliation along a number of fronts, including boycotts of Australian wine and beef. We unequivocally oppose this behavior and strongly support Foreign Minister Marise Payne’s rejection of “any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment.”

This incident is part of a broader and concerning pattern from the Chinese government. As we continue to confront this deadly disease and its consequences, we will be faced with many tough decisions, including those that may arise from the Chinese government’s continued lack of cooperation and transparency. One decision that is not difficult is to always stand with our Australian mates. No matter the external pressure or coercion, we will always have Australia’s back, just as Australia has always had ours.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of the U.S.-Australia alliance. We look forward to continuing to work with you in support of our common interests and values.

In Mateship,



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Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress



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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



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James E. Risch  
United States Senator



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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



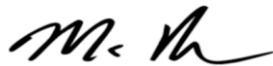
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Cory Gardner  
United States Senator



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



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Ron Johnson  
United States Senator



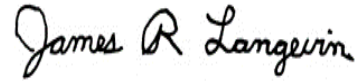
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David A. Perdue  
United States Senator



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Todd Young  
United States Senator



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Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress



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Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Tom Cole  
Member of Congress



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Ed Case  
Member of Congress



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Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



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William R. Timmons IV  
Member of Congress




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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Ron Wright  
Member of Congress



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Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



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Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress



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Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress



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Steve Stivers  
Member of Congress