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COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
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January 25, 2021

Dr. David Kessler, M.D.
Chief Science Officer of COVID Response
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. Kessler,

Congratulations on being named Chief Science Officer of COVID Response. You are in a position to make a tremendous impact to curb the negative effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our great nation.

I write to draw your attention to the success that the state of Florida has had, with the assistance of your Department, in getting high risk populations vaccinated at record pace and to respectfully request Florida's prioritization in receiving vaccine doses.

As the Member of Congress with the oldest average-aged constituency in the nation, I am focused on ensuring that our seniors get vaccinated as soon as possible. As you know well, the older population group is generally at highest risk for severe illness or death after contracting COVID-19, and it is everyone's hope that the vaccine will improve these outcomes. Florida's population is estimated to be made up of 20 percent of individuals aged 65 and over, higher than the estimated 16 percent nation-wide, and 28 percent of Florida's nonelderly population have pre-existing conditions, slightly higher than the national average.

Florida was the first state to vaccinate more than 500,000 individuals 65 years or older. This age bracket accounts for nearly 65% of the more than 1.3 million vaccines administered to date. This is great news for our state and nation as we combat this pandemic. We cannot maintain this rate of vaccination without your help. Given our high population of seniors it is critical we maintain a high rate of vaccination, but in order to do so we need your assistance to ensure we have an ongoing supply of vaccine doses.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently wrote to the federal government in request of doubling Florida's existing allocation of vaccine supply. I fully support the Governor's request for increased supply with the understanding that exact numbers are decisions that your Department can best make.

I wish you great success in your new role. If I can be of assistance to you or your team, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Daniel Webster

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel Webster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Member of Congress