

# **U.S. Rep. Pocan: Introduces the “COVID Defense Act” to direct just over 1 percent of Pentagon spending towards vaccinating 30% of the world’s poorest populations**

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## **Pocan Introduces The “COVID Defense Act” to Direct Just Over 1 Percent of Pentagon Spending Towards Vaccinating 30% of the World’s Poorest Populations**

*Proposal could nearly double the number of people vaccinated in low-income countries worldwide with existing international efforts.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Today, **U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (WI-02)** introduced the COVID Defense Act, which would transfer a 1.3% of U.S. military spending, \$9.6 billion, to global vaccination efforts, vaccinating potentially an additional 30% of the world’s low-income population within a year.

*“We can’t bomb our way out of a global pandemic,” **Congressman Pocan***

**said.** *“Right now, COVID is the greatest risk to our national security as well as the world’s security. Shifting funds from weaponry and military contractors to producing COVID vaccines will save hundreds of thousands – if not millions – of lives around the world. At a time when America spends more on its military than the next 11 closest nations combined, we should be able to sacrifice a little over 1% of that to save lives, build global goodwill, and actually make the world a safer, healthier place.”*

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The \$9.6 billion in additional COVAX funding for vaccine procurement could lead to an additional 1.8 billion COVID vaccine doses for lower-income countries in 2021 and early 2022, combined [to protect potentially 60% of the population](#) in low-income countries as part of the 91 nations participating in the COVAX Advance Market Commitment program. By more than doubling the amount of funds available for vaccine production, procurement, and distribution internationally, the COVID Defense Act could enable up to another 30% of the world’s vulnerable population to have access to a COVID vaccine – greatly curtailing the ongoing spread of COVID-19 variants.

*“I can think of no effort that would do more to positively position the United States around the world as a caring nation, while directly showing our global position, than distributing vaccines. The United States is the greatest democracy in the world, and we best show that by sharing our wealth and knowledge,”* **said Pocan.**

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The COVID Defense Act would remove \$9.6 billion in defense spending – 1.3% of the \$740.5 billion authorized in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act – and authorize President Biden to direct the same amount of funding to COVID vaccine production and distribution efforts benefitting the low-income international community. The bill protects funds intended for our U.S. military personnel from any possible transfer.