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Preventing Future Pandemics Act of 2021 Remains Stalled in Congress
A Public Health Expert Fears We Have Collectively Become Complacent in Thinking the
Pandemic Was “Unprecedented” and Urges Immediate Passage of the Bill

August 11, 2021 (Albuquerque, NM) – “Unprecedented” is the word often used to describe the events of the past year and a half. However, the conditions that contributed to the emergence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19—and of diseases such as Ebola, HIV/AIDS, swine flu, and bird flu—all have similar origins. These [zoonotic diseases](#) spread through unhealthy contact between humans and animals—usually through cruel exploitation such as wildlife trafficking. To stop future pandemics, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Environment Program say all countries must stop the trade of wild animals for food and breeding.

The Preventing Future Pandemics Act of 2021, a bipartisan bill introduced in both the US Senate and the House of Representatives, aims to end the forms of animal trafficking that contribute to these global outbreaks. It leverages international cooperation to help all nations adopt these changes, while restricting trade for those who don’t. However, despite bipartisan support, the measure has remained stalled for months.

The continued delay in passing the measure has raised dire concerns for Dr. Hope Ferdowsian, CEO of Phoenix Zones Initiative, a global nonprofit organization on a mission to advance the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of people, animals, and the planet through a [Just One Health](#) approach.

“A Just One Health approach builds on the good intentions of the One Health framework, which recognizes the connections between human and animal health,” says Dr. Ferdowsian. “Just One Health strives to create a foundation on which public policies, institutions, and practices can become socially, environmentally, and economically just—and to prevent deadly diseases from occurring in the first place. By curbing the wildlife trade, the Preventing Future Pandemics Act of 2021 would uphold the spirit of a Just One Health approach.”

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“Alarming, almost 75 percent of the world’s emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic in origin,” says Dr. Ferdowsian. “The action, or lack thereof, in addressing this staggering statistic is deeply concerning. We strongly urge Congress to pass [Senate Bill 37](#) and [House Bill 151](#) immediately,” says Dr. Ferdowsian. “It’s critical to prevent global health crises. The next life-threatening outbreak is right around the corner.”

If passed, the measure could prevent another pandemic, which, in one year, cost more than [3 million human lives](#) worldwide and uncounted animal lives on [farms](#), in [laboratories](#), and in the wild.

About Dr. Hope Ferdowsian

[Hope Ferdowsian](#) is president and CEO of Phoenix Zones Initiative and author of *Phoenix Zones: Where Strength Is Born and Resilience Lives*. For more than two decades, as a double board-certified internal medicine and preventive medicine physician, she has cared for individuals who have experienced displacement and violence and has worked on public policies to address structural inequities, abuse, and exploitation. Dr. Ferdowsian’s work across six continents has included collaboration with the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States and the development of medical, public health, and educational resources for nongovernmental organizations, national governments, and intergovernmental organizations. Her work has been featured by *Scientific American*, The Huffington Post, the *Times Literary Supplement*, the BBC, Voice of America, the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), and other international news outlets. Dr. Ferdowsian was named a Humanitarian of the Year by the American College of Physicians in 2017. She is also an associate professor at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, a co-director of the Society for Asylum Medicine, and a medical expert for Physicians for Human Rights.

About Phoenix Zones Initiative

Phoenix Zones Initiative is a global nonprofit organization that advances the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of people, animals, and the planet through a [Just One Health](#) approach. Led by physicians and a diverse team, Phoenix Zones Initiative advances legal, economic, and public policy to uplift the most vulnerable, including children and animals, and the organization also provides resources so others can do the same. Follow Phoenix Zones Initiative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and the [Phoenix Zones Initiative](#) website.

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Media Note:

Dr. Ferdowsian is available for interviews upon request. She also recently gave a live presentation on [How to Prevent the Next Pandemic](#), in which she explains the issue from a public health perspective.