

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 18, 2020

Chairman Frank Pallone
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone,

We write to request you use your oversight authority as Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee to investigate possible irregularities in the State of Florida's daily COVID death tally reporting from October 24, 2020 through November 17, 2020.

As reported by the South Florida Sun Sentinel, a possible inconsistent pattern emerged shortly after early voting began in Florida. It appears that the State of Florida Health Department excluded the long-backlogged deaths in daily death counts beginning October 24, only to resume inclusion of these deaths on November 17, 2020.¹ Typically, these deaths were a significant part of the daily reports because doctors do not have the ability to report deaths contemporaneously. For example, in the preceding 30-day period before the change, deaths occurring at least a month before accounted for 44% of the total daily tally.

This change in the calculation of deaths resulted in significantly lower death tallies immediately before the election. Additionally, this change came within three days of Governor DeSantis' announcement of audits of all COVID suspected deaths before inclusion in the daily numbers. Multiple requests by the media for transparency of the State's methodology have been ignored by the Florida Department of Health. Without transparency, analysts are unable to ascertain the reason for the sudden change.

To maintain the highest level of safety, the residents of Florida must have complete transparency concerning the methodology and calculation of the daily COVID death tally. As cases surge nationwide, Floridians must be assured of truthful reporting by their Department of Health.

We respectfully request that you use your oversight authority to investigate this irregularity. We look forward to working with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and incoming Biden administration on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

¹ Goodman, Indy Krischer, and Flesher, David. *A mysterious gap in COVID-19 deaths appeared in Florida before the presidential election*, South Florida Sun Sentinel, Dec. 15, 2020, available at: <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/coronavirus/fl-ne-ss-prem-covid-deaths-florida-election-20201216-f4kgezj4rf75ppumt4omxfxy-story.html>.



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