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## **COVID-19 Longhailers across the Nation United in Call for Biden Administration to Form Long COVID Assistance Programs and a Long COVID Task Force**

*As the Omicron surge brings likely flood of new cases of Long COVID in 2022, the COVID-19 Longhailer Advocacy Project (C-19 LAP) calls for strong leadership to prevent irreversible economic devastation for millions of Americans and to protect national medical systems*

**Boca Raton, FL** - The COVID-19 Longhailer Advocacy Project (C-19 LAP), in partnership with the Long Covid and chronic illness communities, is [calling for](#) the **immediate formation of Long Covid Assistance Programs (LCAP) and a Long Covid Task Force (LCTF)** to address the neglected needs of this population. COVID-19 has brought financial devastation to millions of COVID Longhailers in the United States (and around the world), creating a crisis that will have decades-long consequences for individuals and the nation alike if not addressed immediately.

In an [open letter](#) to President Biden, Cabinet and Congressional leaders, and key governmental agencies, C-19 LAP asks the President to address this burgeoning crisis with the American people on March 1 in the State of the Union address and to take immediate action. Strong leadership in this moment can help prevent irreversible economic devastation for millions of Americans that will impact the national economy for decades to come and overwhelm the medical system beyond repair.

[The letter](#) reminds leaders that 10-30% of those infected with COVID-19, even those with mild or asymptomatic cases, have become COVID Longhaulers, suffering from post-viral symptoms for months, even years. Karyn Bishof, Founder and President of C-19 LAP is among them: “I became infected with COVID-19 in March 2020. Nearly two years later, I am still sick and will never be able to return to my job as a first responder. I am a single mother who became disabled by COVID in the line of duty, yet I do not qualify for any meaningful assistance programs. There is something very wrong with that. I need President Biden and our nation’s leaders to take the financial devastation of Long Covid seriously.”

“Long Covid” is the patient-preferred term for this post-viral phenomenon, officially identified as Post Acute Sequela of COVID-19 (PASC). With more than 52 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, there are, at minimum, 5.2 million Americans suffering from Long Covid. That number will increase, as Dr. Anthony Fauci stated in late December that the rapidly spreading Omicron variant, though milder, can still lead to post-viral symptoms.

Many COVID Longhaulers, like Bishof, have been unable to return to work and have no lifelines from the government. People have lost their jobs, their homes, their vehicles, and more. Even worse, they have lost their sense of worth and identity, as they struggle to find knowledgeable and skilled healthcare providers able to help.

As we approach the second anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation’s leaders have been perplexed by the number of unfilled jobs. But the Long Covid community notes that COVID-19, a mass disabling event, is contributing to the increased number of unfilled jobs in the United States, as many COVID Longhaulers are unable to return to work. In mid December, before spread of the Omicron strain, McKinsey reported that the top reason for becoming unemployed was [leaving work due to illness](#) --- including over 40% of those reporting they were no longer seeking work. Indeed, [the Labor Department announced](#) in early January 2022 that hiring in the United States slowed in December 2021 at a rate higher than economists had expected.

Ann Wallace, PhD, Vice President of C-19 LAP, explains that: “**A significant number of Longhaulers, likely more than a million people, have been too sick to work, and no one is counting us.** I became sick in March 2020 and am finally able to return to full-time teaching as a college professor this month, 22 months later. I’m not 100% recovered, but more than a year of extensive rehabilitation has helped me get back on my feet. I see so many members of the Long Covid community getting worse rather than better though, and it is devastating.”

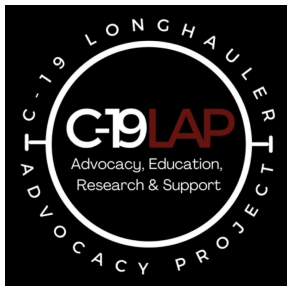
Bishof and others disabled by Long Covid have few options. COVID Longhaulers have fought to qualify for Social Security Disability and other assistance programs, usually with no success. Existing social service programs are not equipped to handle the dramatic spike in disabled Americans.

**The Long Covid and chronic illness communities are asking President Biden, his Cabinet and Congressional leadership, and public health agencies to take action immediately.**

**Long Covid Assistance Programs** would provide financial aid for those with Long Covid who are unable to work, whether short- or long-term. The proposed White House-level **Long Covid Task Force** would keep count of the number of Americans impacted by Long Covid, project the long-term impact on the workforce, the economy, generational poverty, and more, and to take strategic, coordinated action across all Federal agencies to minimize the suffering of millions of Americans.

### **ABOUT THE COVID-19 LONGHAULER ADVOCACY PROJECT:**

The COVID-19 Longhailer Advocacy Project ([C-19 LAP](#)) was formed in June 2020 to raise awareness and advocate for the staggering and growing number of COVID Longhailers in the United States. Its mission is to advance the understanding of Long Covid and expedite solutions and assistance for COVID Longhailers through advocacy, education, research, and support.



**Karyn Bishof, Founder & President**  
*March 2020 Longhailer*

**Lisa O'Brien, Secretary**  
*March 2020 Longhailer*

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